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by Perley Poore Sheehan

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OCTOBER 1916

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THE OCTOBER

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Vol. L OCTOBER, 1916 No. 2

The SMART SET

Edited by
George Jean Nathan and H. L. Mencken
Manuscripts *must* be addressed, "Editors of THE SMART SET"

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Vol. L OCTOBER, 1916 No. 2

The SMART SET

Belles lettres et bonne humeur.

THE SAINT

By William F. Jenkins

IN the tiny village of Catalpa there lived a worthy man, a shoemaker, whose life was most exemplary. He was the model for all the people round about. He never drank, smoked, or swore; neither did he spend lavishly, nor borrow from anyone. Yet with all his saintly life, he was tolerant of all vices and weaknesses, and never reproached anyone for any crime or sin. When sin was mentioned in his presence, he took refuge in silence.

One day a learned scholar from the capital of the country in which the shoemaker lived passed that way. Hearing of this holy man, he determined to visit him, and learn whence his ethics were derived.

The shoemaker received him and heard his questions in silence. Then he spoke:

"Men call me a saint," he said. "They say I am humble, chaste, industrious, thrifty, honest—in short, a paragon of all the virtues. I am. I am humble because the people around me say I am a saint, and I know they are such fools that they are not likely to be right in such a matter. I am chaste principally because I am cross-eyed, and no woman would look at me unless I had much money, which I have not. I am industrious because I like to eat occasionally, and here there is no other way to get food. I am thrifty. I owe no man money, because, fools though they are, yet none of my neighbors is fool enough to lend to me, and I am honest because there is nothing worth stealing in the village."

"And your tolerance, and your silence when sin is spoken of?"

"My tolerance is honest envy, and I am silent because I have no sins of my own to brag about."

OPUS I

By Robert DeCamp Leland

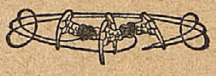
I DON'T understand why people are always poking fun at marriage; and why they invariably go into convulsions of laughter whenever vaudeville comedians and comic-opera librettists liken matrimony to a battle.

I think their humor is quite misplaced.

My wife is the dearest, tenderest woman in all the world. I have never known her to speak a harsh word or show a moment's anger; much less to disfigure my anatomy with Dresden-ware. Her serenity is always undisturbed, no matter what the provocation.

Only last week when we stood up in church, at the most impressive moment in the service, with all eyes upon us, I couldn't find the ring.

But not even the shadow of a frown darkened her face.



CATS

By Morris Gilbert

CATS have no sense of humor, but like gray
Back-yard Iagos, brood and fiercely shrink,
Stroking grim prickly whiskers as they think
About affairs, revenges, brawls, and prey.

Cats to red gusty passions oft give way;
They haunt old tarnished thresholds and they slink
Along, intensely frustrate, on the brink
Of antic doom, like banshees lithe and fey.

The only cat that ever smiled was he
That grinned in sunny Cheshire formerly.
If cats should suddenly sprout up about
Six times as big as they are now, no doubt
The bold behemoth and the jaguar
Would be less awful then than cats, by far.



FROZEN FIRE

By Perley Poore Sheehan

"AND you, also, are — fiancée?" Christie smiled and nodded. It was surprising how easily she and the Vicomtesse de la Motte had slipped back into their old intimacy.

"An affair of love?"

Christie shrugged her shoulders. She was wearing a tea-gown of a softness that made the gesture effective, but there was a look in her eyes which meant: "We women can't expect everything." Christie, moreover, was of a blonde and tender beauty suitable to creatures—like doves, for example—destined to sacrifice.

"And you?"

"Ah, me—I love him madly," the Vicomtesse confessed steadily, with deliberation.

There was almost always that deliberation in her speech, somewhat as if she were thinking in French and translating her thoughts into English as she went along. She was an American, though. She and Christie Reynolds had been friends together in the same school up the Hudson—had once been quite insanely attached to each other, as is often the way with young girls. That was ten years ago, when the future Vicomtesse de la Motte was still Claire Singleton, and she and Christie were each thirteen.

These ten years had been kinder to Christie than they had been to Claire. The Vicomtesse looked worn. She had lived a lot. Her health was none too good. Still, she was brilliant—fascinating, even—in a sophisticated way. She was slender, dark, very Parisian as to perfumes, cosmetics, clothes.

"I was very young, you remember," the Vicomtesse continued, with a sigh of relief, "when they married me to M. de la Motte. I was nineteen. He was fifty-seven. I wasn't unhappy. You see"—with a gust of feeling—"at that time I didn't know what love was. But now—ah, now!" The Vicomtesse shivered and wilted. "I should die if I were forced to live without love—this love—my love." She recovered her poise and brightness. "Christie, sweetheart, do you mean that you've not yet experienced this marvelous thing?"

Christie, with her fair head momentarily bowed over the tea-table and one of her white hands fluttering hesitant, like a butterfly, between bonbons and cigarettes, considered the question while through her brain and heart there swept a little gust of unforgotten music.

"Once, years ago, in Paris—" she began.

"And ever since," the Vicomtesse supplemented.

"The memory of it remains," said Christie, with delicious regret.

"But it isn't he whom you will marry."

"No. I've never seen him since, nor written. And now, of course, I'm perfectly devoted to William—even if it isn't *la grande passion.* You don't know him, but you know the family. They're the Philadelphia Scolls."

"Wonderful! Not only rich, but *sans reproche.*"

Into the very white skin of Miss Reynolds' throat there came a slight stain of pink. The Vicomtesse may have noticed it. She hastened to make amends.

"We all have our troubles," she said. "M. de la Motte died, you know, in

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a—let us call it the house of a friend."

"There have been scandals enough in our family," said Miss Reynolds, fortified. "Father was disbarred. It may have been political. I like to think so. He used to be a Judge, you know. But they published terrible things about him in the newspapers. At any rate, it killed him. He died a year later. The estate never has been properly set to rights. Then, right on top of all this, Thurston—you remember my kid brother—had that outrageous affair of his with Mrs. Clendenning. The papers were filled with that too. In spite of all this, William has been so loyal!"

"Well he might be. As Mme. Scoll you'll be perfection."

"It will help a lot," smiled Christie, sadly. She completed her meaning by a rather touching glance about her.

She was in her mother's drawing-room, and there was no denying the fact that it could have been done over to advantage. For the rest, the drawing-room was that of a house only a few doors removed from upper Fifth Avenue, but it was a house that had long suffered by comparison with its neighbors.

"He is very rich himself," ventured the Vicomtesse.

"He really will have quite an amazing lot of money some day. He's the only heir—he's to have Gray Towers—everything like that."

"And he's young."

"Just twenty-six."

"And good-looking, naturally."

"Yes, and no. He's healthy—weighs two hundred—has a pug nose, but rather good eyes—gray. You'll have a chance to judge him for yourself. He's getting up a house party for Gray Towers. I'm doing the inviting. He does absolutely everything I ask. And that will give me an opportunity to meet—"

"Yes," said the Vicomtesse, reading the question in her friend's pause, "he's followed me to New York. Dear, silly boy! I had all the trouble in the world to prevent him from treading on my heels right on into the Ritz. It wasn't the gossip that I should have minded so much, but, really, he can't afford it. He's dreadfully poor. Thank Heaven, I have enough for both of us."

"A foreigner?"

"No; an American; hardly an American; rather a cosmopolite. He has spent most of his life on the Continent—Paris, Vienna, Constantinople. His father was one of those unfortunates of the diplomatic service—perpetual first secretaries, while our parvenu ambassadors come and go."

Miss Reynolds gave an almost imperceptible start.

"Young, this time?"—with a smile.

"Divinely so. Myself, I feel like a grandmother. Pardon me, my dear; I know that we are both twenty-three. He's only twenty-five. I feel like a criminal—immoral almost. I catch myself saying: *'Une femme de mon age!"*

But as Christie Reynolds said this there was still about her an air of veiled intensity. The little Vicomtesse, however, was launched on a subject that absorbed her utterly.

"He's an angel," she said, with crooning passion. "That is, he would be if angels were not so eternally blonde. He's dark, and tall and slender and straight like a young Arab sheik. I adore him. It makes me almost afraid. When he takes me in his arms—ah, *mon Dieu!*—it is as if I were being swirled straight up to Heaven in a whirlwind of fire."

The Vicomtesse permitted herself a shiver of ecstasy. Out of sympathy, perhaps, Christie's own tender breast had quickened its rise and fall. Her voice was soft and vibrant as she asked:

"You say that his father was first secretary of the embassy in Paris?"

"Tiens!—that was three years ago, when you were there. Perhaps you have met—"

A maid came in, delivered herself of a slight curtsy, and moved forward to take away the tea things. Miss Reynolds would have stopped her, but she was suddenly grateful for the interruption. Out of some secret chamber,

as dim and vast as a temple, there again poured the strains of well-remembered music. It was sacred music, so-called, and yet it might have been the world's supreme love-song. It was Adolphe Adam's *"Noël."*

She had heard the music, as she heard it now, at a midnight mass in the Madeleine—with the warm voice of a famous baritone borne along on the surge of a stringed orchestra—while, at her elbow, was a youth who was tall and slender and dark like a young Arab sheik, and whose father, so someone had told her, was first secretary of the American Embassy.

CHAPTER II

THERE was the sound of a motor drawing up in front of the house. There came an all but inaudible ring from the depths of the hall.

"I told him to stop here to pick me up," the Vicomtesse was saying.

These were mere incidents in a panic, so far as Christie was concerned. The panic was almost wholly inward. The only outward sign of it was that quickened breathing, an added brightness of Christie's eyes, a warming of the pink and gold in her complexion. But the panic was there, and she recognized it as such. For years this secret little romance of hers had been a sort of psychic plaything. Now she recognized it as something of potential deadliness. She was mystified, and frightened.

A footman brought in a card. The Vicomtesse was at her side when she looked at it.

"It's he," said the Vicomtesse.

Christie had read the name—Frederic Minor—at a glance, and her own heart echoed the words:

"It's he."

Frederic Minor had not greatly changed during those three years. Nor could Christie have greatly changed. His recognition of her had been as instantaneous as had been her recognition of him. The only difference was that she, after a manner, was prepared for the encounter. He was not. It was a slight shock that translated itself into something of a flutter as he bent over her hand; and also, possibly, into a certain added pressure for the fleeting moment that her hand was in contact with his lips.

There was something of gratitude in this, so Christie divined. On that memorable Christmas Eve in Paris, she and Minor had kissed each other. With an intuition almost as ready as her own, Minor had guessed that this was still their secret—that Christie had not told the Vicomtesse about it. Hence Minor was grateful.

There was another moment, when he straightened up—all of Minor's movements were as lithe and graceful as those of a panther—when there was a direct and potent communion between him and Christie. His eyes had passed over the surface of her before, and her eyes over the surface of him. It was as if she were looking at a shadow, then. Most likely that was the way it was with him. But, this time, their eyes met and fused like rays of soft, warm light. It was only for a moment. But it was a moment of revelation to both of them. Also, it was a moment of warning.

There was the usual prelude of laughter and idle talk, but even then it was apparent that the Vicomtesse was not perfectly at ease. Perhaps no woman ever is when she finds herself with the man she loves in the presence of another woman who is undeniably more beautiful.

"We must be hurrying away," said the little Mme. de la Motte. "We have errands, and then, this evening, we are dining with my grandmother. She calls it supper and expects her guests at half-past six."

There was an intended humor in the remark, but, somehow, it sounded pitiful. It did to Christie. In her heart she was raging at herself. For the Vicomtesse de la Motte she was feeling very much the same degree of affection she had felt ten years ago when they were classmates at the boarding-school. Yet, coupled to this sentiment

was that other one for Frederic Minor. It was like having an angel and a devil hitched to the same harrow, with her heart for a field.

"You love him, and he loves you."

"He is necessary to the life and happiness of Claire; and you—you are necessary to another."

There was an infernal chorus of whispers repeating things like that in the center of her brain all the time that the surface of it, so to speak, was engaged in formulating shams and deceptions.

"I should be so happy to offer you tea—or a highball—or a cocktail," she heard herself murmur.

"How odd that you two should be such old friends," she heard the Vicomtesse say; "when I thought that I was bringing you a perfect surprise!"

"You meet so many people—delightful people—some of them—at the embassies," she heard Minor respond.

"And, you must remember, dear,"—it was her own voice this time—"that we met each other only that once. Do you remember?" Her eyes were upon Minor again, but, once more, they were only on the surface of him. "We were all in a party, and we got separated from the others, and you found a *sacristain* whom you knew and who found such a splendid place for us."

She hadn't intended to say so much. The words were out in spite of herself. They conjured up a vision of purple shadows and yellow lights, the rolling haze and translating smell of incense, the dimly seen crowds of worshipers, the subdued thunder of the litany, then the transcendent appeal of *"Noël."* In a sort of vertigo, her soul soaring at a height that made her mind reel, she had yielded to something like the supreme luxury of death.

"Indeed," came Minor's voice, "I have never forgotten it. That was the night before I had to leave for Saigon. And when I did get there I was down with a fever which kept me on my back for six months."

"Pauvre chérie!" murmured the little Vicomtesse de la Motte.

She had slipped a hand under one of his arms in a gesture of possession. She looked up at him. Standing there at his side she came up to his shoulder, just about. There was manifest devotion in her glance. There was an affectionate gallantry—as much as was permissible in the circumstances—in Minor's slight yielding to the pressure she gave him; but there was a far-away look in his eyes.

"Ah," said Christie, "that must have been while we were in London. You possibly remember that we had intended to go to Rome. Our plans were all upset. I'm quite sure that innumerable letters went astray."

It was a double explanation, right over the head of the little Vicomtesse, albeit she may have been sprayed by a fine mist of doubt. Again she insisted that it was time that she and her Frederic be off on their way.

Christie accompanied her guests as far as the hall. There she gave the kiss penitent to the girl who had been Claire Singleton, and into this token of their renewed friendship she put such a warmth of devotion that she felt almost absolved. But she was all confusion again when she found her fingers once more in contact with those of Frederic Minor.

Claire had discovered a mirror on the wall, had turned her back while she touched hat and coiffure.

There was no mistaking, this time, any more than there had been that other time, the message which Minor sent up to Christie as once again he held her dimpled knuckles to his lips. Had he spoken aloud, this message could no more clearly have been:

"As it was that night in the Madeleine, so it is now and ever shall be. O Lord, how wonderful; how sad!"

CHAPTER III

CHRISTIE went up to her mother's room after her guests were gone. Mrs. Reynolds was an invalid, rather by intention than by an act of God; it gave her a perennial excuse for the well-

known philanderings of the late Judge Reynolds, her husband. And even yet she displayed that type of frail prettiness which forgives men everything and women nothing. Christie had recognized and classified this quality in her mother, both instinctively and by experience. There had always been an element of dread connected with it, like a scourge hanging on a wall. The scourge would never be used on her brother Thurston, any more than it had ever been used on the Judge; but it might easily be applied to her own bare shoulders should she ever run counter to her mother's will.

Christie brushed her mother's cheek with her own, but she did it with an air of one who is distraught. Mrs. Reynolds surrendered her slight interest in the book she had been reading and studied her daughter complacently.

"How does Claire look?" Mrs. Reynolds inquired.

"Frightful—thirty, at least; but her clothes are *chic*—Poiret, without being too fantastic. She always did know how to dress."

Christie was looking at herself in a cheval-glass—just as she was, without changing a strand of hair or a fold of her dress. Like this, a couple of minutes ago, she had appeared to Frederic Minor. Like this he was possibly remembering her now. The wicked thought thrust itself in upon her that not for all the silks and cosmetics of the Rue de la Paix would she have exchanged her skin for Claire's.

"Well, my dear," said Mrs. Reynolds, "it won't be long now before you'll have all the clothes that any girl could wish. William loves beauty. He's shown that."

"Claire's also engaged to be married," said Christie, with a deft touch of impatience.

"Again?"

"He was here just now—Frederic Minor."

Mrs. Reynolds received the announcement in silence. There is a certain telepathy between mothers and daughters, however much they may differ in temperament. Christie was idly touching up her face and hair by this time. Mrs. Reynolds watched her for several seconds.

"Is he still as poor as a churchmouse?" she asked, at last.

"He didn't look as if he were," Christie replied, with an instinct for defense. "Claire's certainly had all the luck."

"I don't see how you can say that," chided Mrs. Reynolds, with a hint of chill. "You're the envy of every girl in New York—and Philadelphia; or will be, as soon as the engagement is announced. You're young and beautiful and have your health, and certainly no girl ever had a lover who was more devoted."

Christie paused in what she was doing. It was as if she felt her head begin to reel. She had turned, and the words had sprung from her lips, before she could control herself:

"But I don't love him!"

It was an explosion. It was followed by a shaking silence. Both mother and daughter were using the silence for their own ends—Christie, to prepare defenses against the counter-attack which was sure to follow; Mrs. Reynolds, to summon her forces to rectify this dangerous situation before it got out of hand.

"Don't love him!" exclaimed Mrs. Reynolds, softly, with a touch of irony.

"No."

"You talk like a silly schoolgirl," said Mrs. Reynolds. Her irony had shaded into mild contempt.

"It has everything to do with my happiness," said Christie, feeling the ground slipping from under her. "I don't love him. I never did love him. I know that I never shall."

"What in the world has Claire been saying to you?—something French, I presume."

"She has nothing to do with this."

Mrs. Reynolds was still fencing for time, still studying the situation. She spoke with asperity.

"You're going to be married, girlie. Love and happiness have nothing to

do with each other where marriage is concerned. Don't make me ill."

"I'd rather marry the man I loved," Christie proclaimed, feeling that the statement was a bromide but incapable of bettering it. "I like William. I suppose that I could get some satisfaction out of being Mrs. Scoll; but—but—"

She found her mother's languid superiority upsetting.

"Don't be primitive, darling," Mrs. Reynolds pleaded. "Your poor father was unfortunate enough in that respect. He was all for love. So's your brother, Thurston." She sighed. "I've been unfortunate in other ways, and all on account of love. I say it, and I mean it, love is damnable."

"Mother!"

"Only fit for butchers and cooks."

"But you loved papa."

"You're a foolish girl. I lived with him—happily—for twenty-two years. Could I have done that if I had loved him?"

"I don't understand."

"I should have been miserable—become a scandal—wanted a divorce. The whole divorce evil is due to our silly habit of marrying those we love instead of those we like."

"But you've said yourself that William is in love with me," said Christie with constraint, trying to meet her mother on her own terrain.

"I know it," Mrs. Reynolds replied, with quiet intensity; "and I've thanked God that he does. It's all right in a man. It may even be beautiful. Where would we be if he hadn't come along with his love for you? But love is absurd in a girl—a girl of breeding; worse than absurd, it's outrageous."

"Really," said Christie, panting to express herself aright, "you make me feel more than ever as if I were selling myself. There, I've said it. I haven't wanted to say it—not even to myself."

"It's unkind of you to thrust these crudities upon me, sweetheart," said Mrs. Reynolds, with a semblance of amiable malice. "Where in the world do you get your ideas? You certainly don't get them from me. I know of no more egregious nonsense than this hypocrisy of selling oneself. Of course you're selling yourself."

"Mother! How can you!" Christie whispered it.

"Let's dispense with the Sarah Bernhardt, dear," Mrs. Reynolds proposed, charitably. "There is no occasion for drama. We're merely dealing with facts. My little girl doesn't want to cheapen herself, does she?—nor throw herself away on a man simply because she loves him. Common girls do that. It's the source of all human misery."

"And joy!"

"There's not a girl in the world—granted she was in her right senses," Mrs. Reynolds persisted, "who wouldn't sell herself, if she could keep the conventions and get her price—especially if the *parti* happened to be as attractive and devoted as William. Now please don't let us discuss this thing any more, darling. You know how little it requires to get my insomnia started."

"Very well, dear," said Christie. "I'm going to dress. Is there anything that Annette can bring you?"

"She might bring me a little Scotch," said Christie's mother. "I feel a trifle offish."

CHAPTER IV

William Scoll was certainly all that the world in general—and Mrs. Reynolds in particular—and even Christie, in particular—considered him as a desirable *parti*. There was possibly no more attractive young bachelor in the United States, from the viewpoint of anxious parents with marriageable daughters.

He was no Adonis, to be sure. Christie had summed him up pretty well—two hundred pounds, healthy, a pug nose, good eyes. But he was twenty-six, sole heir to the Scoll millions and prestige, and had no blatant bad habits. It was, as a matter of fact, an index to his somewhat simple and perfectly honest character that he had

picked out Christie Reynolds, with her poverty and unsound family traditions, to be his wife. He had no idea that he was buying her. There was nothing of the purchaser in any of his contacts with her. His whole attitude had been unequivocally that of a devoted suitor.

And this accounted for the genuine fondness which Christie had ended by conceding to him.

He came to see her that evening. It was at the tag-end of the New York season, when there was nothing much doing in a social way—a state of affairs for which Christie, as well as Scoll, would ordinarily have been grateful. But to-night the thought of possibly two hours of his uninterrupted society smote her with dismay.

The dismay was none the less in that it was touched with pity. Both were there as she greeted Scoll in the dilapidated drawing-room. It was a mingled feeling based on that very fondness she felt for him, the fact that he —so rich and young and powerful, master of Gray Towers and a dozen other estates—was here in the midst of her shabbiness, eager for her smile, hanging on her welcome.

It hurt her to feel that she was looking at him in terms of Frederic Minor. Scoll must have been two inches shorter than Minor, and a good ten inches greater about the girth. Minor had the contemplative poise of a thoroughgoing man of the world. About Scoll, despite his avoirdupois, there was a certain friskiness suggestive of a good-natured pup.

He took one of Christie's hands in both of his, and eyed her greedily yet fearfully as he drew her toward him until his lips came into contact with the cheek she had turned. He sought to hold her there, but released her with alacrity when he discovered that she was unwilling.

"How is your mother?" he asked, with tender deference.

"Not so very well," Christie replied.

"She's a dear woman," breathed Scoll, with conviction. "We must get her over to Gray Towers for that house-party of ours."

Said Christie to herself: "If this were Fred here before me now I should have opened my arms to him. Even now we would be in delirium. This room would have been the throne-room of a palace. Ah, God, must I reject all such thoughts?" Aloud she said: "You're so considerate!"

"Who wouldn't be?" he said, with an intake of the breath. "For—listen, Christie!—we're going to announce our engagement at that house-party; aren't we? Say yes, Christie! Say yes, darling!"

Christie gave him a smiling glance from the corner of her eyes, but there was a suspicion of weariness in the movement of her perfect shoulders.

"Let's talk about the house-party," she parried.

She was wondering if she would have the courage to tell him that their engagement would never be announced. Now that he had mentioned it, everything that her mother had said and intimated was buzzing into sound again, filling her brain with confusion and torment. It was the desire not to hurt Scoll which made her put off the blow she felt was inevitable.

"Gray Towers must be lovely now," she mused, as they wandered in the direction of the piano. They had motored over there several times. The baronial majesty of it all swept up in front of Christie's eyes like a vision. That was the price to which her mother had referred. Could it possibly be that her mother was right?

"Uncle Quincy is adding a Japanese garden," Scoll volunteered, good naturedly. "Has twenty Japs there. The place is quite overrun."

"How is Uncle Quincy."

Scoll was an orphan. His Uncle Quincy was the present holder of the bulk of the fortune.

"Still the same old nut," said Scoll, with affectionate irreverence; "still sleeping daytimes and running around in the woods at night after night-prowling bugs."

"Wouldn't he just as lief that we left him and Gray Towers undisturbed?"

"He won't mind us," said Scoll. "It's doubtful whether we shall even see him. He has a little bungalow—or shooting-lodge—two or three miles away from the Towers—it's all on the place—and he has taken to sleeping there, so that he'll be closer to his ants and beetles and things."

There were a number of cottages scattered about the Scoll estate. One of these Christie remembered particularly. She had seen it last June—a small brown cottage nested in greenery and embowered with pink roses. That day, the air had been crystal-clear and of intoxicating fragrance. Overhead was a sky of immaculate blue. And she had thought of Frederic Minor, longed for him, wondered where he was. The memory of it all swept in upon her. She smiled.

"When you smile like that," Scoll whispered hoarsely, "I could say my prayers to you—as I do."

Christie closed her eyes and shook her head.

She had seated herself at the piano. Almost automatically her fingers had fallen upon the opening chords of Adolphe Adam's love-song, but she checked herself, rattled off a fragment of a recent Viennese importation which she knew Scoll liked.

He beamed up at her from the armchair into which he had lowered himself at her side, but there was a touch of speculative wonder in his look.

"Do you love me, Christie?" he asked.

She closed her eyes—a habit of hers—and modified her playing to a slower tempo. She was trying hard not to think of what her mother had said before dinner. She was trying hard not to think of Frederic Minor. She felt as if she ought to make amends for what had been passing through her mind. She admired cleanliness and loyalty. She felt that she possessed neither. A month ago she had promised this man at her side to marry him—"for better or for worse—until death do us part."

"I am very fond of you, William," she said, in a small voice with a minor accompaniment.

"That's enough, I suppose," Scoll whispered, worshipful. "By gad, if such a thing is humanly possible I'll make you love me—although I know that you will never love me as I love you."

"I have two other guests for the party," said Christie.

She hadn't intended to mention Claire and Minor. It was an impulse to stop Scoll in what he was saying that made her speak now. She stood committed.

"Who are they?" asked Scoll, with ready interest. He showed that sort of interest in everything that Christie proposed or even mentioned.

She told him. She watched him. It pleased her to notice that the mention of Claire's title made no special impression on him. The fact that Claire was an old friend of hers was what interested William, not that she was the young widow of the late Vicomte de la Motte.

"And how about—what's his name? —Frederic Minor?"

"He's wonderfully good-looking," said Christie, watching Scoll from the corner of her eye.

"Great," he said, with perfect indulgence. "We'll need a few of those—with me on the grounds. Get him to come along, by all means."

CHAPTER V

If there remained the slightest doubt in Miss Reynolds' mind concerning either her own feelings toward Frederic Minor or his feelings toward her, these doubts were swept away two days later in the tea-room of the Ritz.

She was aware that she was looking her best. She hadn't permitted herself to think about it, but all the time that she was getting ready to go out there was a lurking sense of elation in her heart—the feeling that comes to

one who prepares to keep a rendezvous. No one, moreover, could have looked at her with the eye of wisdom and believed that anything else was the case.

Nature is lavish, but she is lavish with a purpose. Christie's pink and gold complexion, her discreet curves, her flashing teeth and limpid eyes were but the mask of an *arrière pensée* in the brain of Nature fit to make even New York blush.

Oddly enough, she had no special reason to believe that she was to see Minor on this particular afternoon at all. She knew that he had been to Washington; that, in all probability, he was still there. He was no mere idler. He was still connected with the Diplomatic Service. And yet, there was that unacknowledged instinct in the back of Christie's brain that she was going forth to meet him and not the Vicomtesse de la Motte.

As a matter of fact, she did meet Minor in the lobby of the Ritz. He stepped forward to greet her with that lithe grace of his only slightly tempered by a certain restlessness at the absence of his fiancée. There had merely been one of those trivial dislocations of prearranged plans by which Fate is constantly asserting her pre-eminence in the affairs of man.

They left word at the desk that they would be waiting for the Vicomtesse in the tea-room—presumably, she was delayed at her grandmother's, or at her dressmaker's—and traversed the lobby side by side.

There was a harmony in the way they walked, and the beauty of them—man and woman, dark and fair—and, possibly, a certain expression in the faces of them, which must have announced to all the world that here were two of the elect.

Anyway, the world accords much the same sort of deference to its kings and to those condemned to die.

The hotel was a haunted grotto, so far as Christie was concerned; filled with spirit shapes who did obeisance and made way, with a spirit music which hummed and droned an expectant welcome, a general atmosphere of lurking promise. It had never been like that before. She no longer sought to deceive herself. She knew that the miracle had been worked by the presence at her side.

There was not a step, not an instant, when she was not keenly aware that Minor was in contact with her. She didn't have to look at him. Every atom of her being had become perceptive. It was a perception which embraced all five ordinary senses—something protean, a mother of sensations, some of which were just beginning to quicken into life.

A major-domo, with an air of exaltation at being permitted to perform the service, guided them to a table; and there, as the band fell deftly upon a fresh composition, Christie once more looked into Minor's eyes.

As already intimated, Minor had passed his entire life—brief though it had thus far been—in and about the great houses of Europe. He was skilled in all the minor graces of diplomacy. That means that he could drink tea and make pretty little speeches with the best of them. At his beck and call he must have had at his disposition all the compliments that a pretty woman could wish for.

Yet not one of them came to his lips now as his dark eyes encountered Christie's blue ones.

She was seeing him, moreover, in something more than the normal way. It was as if she saw him clairvoyantly—as we sometimes see others in a dream. She saw him whole—body and spirit.

On his face was a look which was definitely boyish—the look of a boy who is dazed and bashful and, possibly, a trifle hurt, and yet who expects the gates of a boyish paradise to open right there before his eyes. He spoke not a word with his lips. But, by a peculiar coincidence—or by a cunning arrangement of Fate—the orchestra was expressing for him much that he might have had to say.

The composition was Russian—one of those plaintively weird and tropic chants right out of the old Jurassic, very ancient, spun from the hearts of the meat-hunters while there were still elephants in Siberia. The meaning of it was that there was only one motive in the world—the motive of mating—the ultimate miracle of original Creation. This meant prowlings by night, through black shadows with flaming stars overhead; and bloody fights, and yearnings fit to twist a man like a tree in a tornado.

It was to such mighty harmonies as this that an imp in uniform took their commands for tea and pastry.

The rest of their speech, for that matter, was like the pretty little grasses and wild flowers which innocently bedeck the loins of Vesuvius and Stromboli.

"I do so hope that the weather will be fine next week," said Christie.

The while her heart was suffocated with some such passage as:

"Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth: for thy love is better than wine."

Minor, to all appearances, was merely taking time to reflect.

"Let us hope so," he said.

But in that slight pause there was a burning sweep within him which might also have been translated—inadequately—by the same old Hebrew Singer of Songs:

"Thy lips, O my spouse, drop as the honeycomb: honey and milk are under thy tongue; and the smell of thy garments is like the smell of Lebanon."

"Mr. Scoll," said Christie, "is so anxious to meet you and Claire!"

The voice in her heart said:

"Poor William little suspects that you and I are the straw and the lighted match. We'll have to be so strong—and careful; or there'll be a conflagration."

"Madame would prefer, *peutêtre, une tartelette,*" said the imp in uniform. He was a Swiss pretending to be French.

"That's very kind of him," said Minor, referring to Scoll, when the imp had disappeared into his native nothingness.

What Minor really meant was:

"I wish that this mucker Scoll had never been born."

They made a pretense at drinking tea and nibbling at pastry. Neither of them could have told with certainty afterward whether they really had eaten or drunk. The Vicomtesse de la Motte remained absent, remained forgotten. By and by the rest of the world slipped into a void. Only the music remained, but the music was a part of them. They were encompassed by a dangerous isolation. A little while ago it would have been impossible for them to refer to what had taken place that night, three years ago, in the Madeleine.

"We sinned," faltered Christie.

There was no longer such a marked divergence between the audible and inaudible lines of their conversation.

"In retrospect," said Minor, "those days we sinned are always the brightest."

"I wonder why," Christie speculated, ready to acknowledge the truth of what Minor said.

"It's because our sins are our own," he replied, "while our virtues belong to everybody; and therefore the delight in counting over our sins."

CHAPTER VI

Uncle Quincy Scoll, to whom his nephew, William, always referred in terms which were affectionate but only semi-flattering, might have merited a similar mental attitude from the world at large.

Like most men of breeding, intelligence and careful habits, who have reached sixty or thereabouts, he was rather beautiful to look at—a shrewd and kindly face, with a good color accentuated by white hair and mustache, of medium height, as slender as a boy. He was every inch the old aristocrat, every inch the master of Gray Towers. He had been a famous polo-player

in his day, had sailed his thirty-footers at Cowes and Cannes, and had shot big game in Uganda with a prince of Orleans. But for the past ten years he had given himself over entirely to his great estate near Philadelphia and to such scientific inquiry as the place suggested — horticultural and entomological.

He had the scientific mind.

It is easy—and cheap and futile—to speculate along certain lines. It would be easy, for example, to say that Uncle Quincy might have been a great scientist, and rendered great services to his kind, had he been forced to fight his way out in the world.

All tommyrot!

One might as well lament that the ornamental shade trees of Gray Towers were not cut down forthwith and sawed into cheap lumber.

He used his scientific mind, moreover, on the human specimens which came and went at Gray Towers year after year. It was only a question of time—indeed, if it had not often occurred already — that some special knowledge of his would render as much aid to his kind as, say, the last bulletin for farmers from the Department of Agriculture at Washington.

It was practically he alone, as a case in point, who had picked out Christie Reynolds, daughter of the late Judge Reynolds, as the future mistress of the line. He had selected her from about a hundred other possibilities.

He had sized up his nephew with a precision and thoroughness which would have surprised that young man.

William Scoll was a human static—the sort who, once fixed, in circumstances at all favorable, would remain fixed to the end of his days. He was bright enough, but not very imaginative. He was energetic enough, with no degree of exuberance. It takes both imagination and exuberance to make a man do scandalous things—if his wife be wisely chosen.

Uncle Quincy had decided to forestall any scandal on William's part. That's all. To this end, Miss Reynolds was a perfect selection.

It wasn't likely that William would ever come in contact with any girl of greater physical beauty. By the time that her beauty began to fade, William's static qualities would have further declared themselves, and he would be irrevocably fixed. Moreover, there was a certain mental and temperamental glow about Christie which Uncle Quincy—who was an amateur eugenist—figured would be a most excellent trait for the future race of Scolls. William had none of this glow. Christie, in brief, was a natural mother. All that she required to rear any number of children to perfection—granted a husband like William and a climate like Pennsylvania's—was plenty of money; and this, of course, William could also supply.

Uncle Quincy didn't think very much of Christie's mother; but the late Judge had certainly been everything that the most exacting eugenist could demand. Besides, whatever his peccadillos, it was his title only which would hang like a golden fruit on the family-tree of the Scolls through the centuries to come.

When some little Scoll was getting born, married, or buried, or elected President, a hundred and fifty years hence, there would be a line in the papers—"a descendant, on the maternal side, of the famous Judge Reynolds."

After all, there is a certain historical justice. Posterity has a habit of honoring names which, during the lifetime of their possessors, were regarded as tainted.

And yet, as tremendous as would be the advantages to the Scolls of grafting the Reynolds stock into their dying trunk, Christie herself would immensely profit, as Uncle Quincy figured it. She was too beautiful to be poor. She had a sickly mother on her hands. The reputation of her family—and therefore her own—was passing through an eclipse which very easily might become permanent. As Mrs.

William Scoll she could emerge from this eclipse, and her troubles, with a quite transcendent brilliancy.

Uncle Quincy confirmed all these past judgments of his with the arrival of Christie and her mother at Gray Towers for the forthcoming house-party. It was even confirmation of his judgment, after a manner, when Mrs. Reynolds sought — unsuccessfully—to flirt with him. Even on the distaff side the future Mrs. William Scoll had some heritage of heart.

Uncle Quincy had not the slightest idea of becoming a member of the house-party himself. But he lingered long enough to take stock of one other pair who appealed to his scientific interest.

In this case the male of the species was tall and slender and dark—as beautiful as a Greek statue, plus a coloring all his own. Uncle Quincy talked to the specimen—found it poor in money but infinitely rich in breeding and education. As an example of *Scarabæus Diplomaticus* it was about perfect. The bug's name, as Uncle Quincy discovered, was Frederic Minor, and thereupon Minor ceased to be a mere specimen for Uncle Quincy and became a man.

Years ago Minor's father and Uncle Quincy had been bosom friends. That was during the old yacht-racing days at Cowes and Cannes.

"Your mother, sir," said Uncle Quincy, with a peculiar softness in his voice, "was a beautiful girl—a most beautiful girl—and talented and lovely in every way."

"It is very beautiful and touching to hear you say so, sir," Minor replied. "You are aware, I presume, that she died while I was so young that I have no recollection of her."

In the depths of Uncle Quincy's sagacious and reflective eyes there came a glint of veiled fire.

"It was a great tragedy," he said. "I know that you won't mind my referring to the fact, but your father and I were rivals for your mother's hand. He won."

There was an expression in the old gentleman's face which intimated that he might have said a lot more along this line had he been so minded. It was an expression that explained, perhaps, the rather more than merely scientific interest he brought to bear upon the selected mate of his diplomatic scarab.

He was delighted to find that she was a bug with a title. Even if she lost it with her marriage, still she would always be the former Vicomtesse de la Motte—a name to conjure with in diplomatic circles. Moreover, she was rich, and no ambassadorial beetle can get very far without a rich hive. That had been the trouble with Minor's father—and mother. Moreover again, the Vicomtesse didn't look very strong; and this, in Uncle Quincy's judgment, was a tremendous asset. She would be strong enough to preside at dinner parties and appear at occasional receptions; but the point was this: She wasn't likely to burden Minor with a family to rear.

All in all, what more could a young diplomatist want?

"So this," said Uncle Quincy in his heart, "is another case of absolutely perfect mating. O Intelligence! How greater art thou than Love!"

Saying which, Uncle Quincy put Gray Towers and its guests behind him and wandered off into the woods.

CHAPTER VII

In the best of families—as in the best of breeds—there are continual throw-backs wherein individual specimens manifest strongly the characteristics of some early ancestor. We thus find coachmen, sailors, gamblers, yokels, etc., all represented. All this by way of suggesting that there may have been some gone and forgotten Scoll who ran a taproom and billiard parlor. On the top floor of the left wing of Gray Towers, William Scoll's father had established a similar institution—everything complete, even to a fellow in a white apron, old English knicker-

bockers, white stockings and slippers, to run the place.

It was an extremely large room, lofty, with gabled rafters overhead. Over each table, of which there were half a dozen, and around one corner, where there was a sort of combination bar and sideboard, there were brilliant lights; but, for all that, there was always abundant twilight in the room, making it a most desirable lair for those who wanted to flirt.

There were about thirty guests at Gray Towers. The weather had turned out to be mild and drizzly. This didn't prevent a number of the guests from taking a turn over the hills with the Gray Towers beagles; but a majority of them had remained at the big house, and a majority of these had found their way up to the billiard-room.

Christie Reynolds and Frederic Minor were there—by no design of their own. No special design—save that of Providence, perhaps—brought them to the same table.

Scoll was off with the beagles. The Vicomtesse de la Motte, conserving her strength for the afternoon and evening, had elected to remain in her room.

At any rate, there they were—Christie and Minor—pretending to play billiards, while their hearts pounded, while their hands shook, while each was overwhelmingly conscious of the other's presence and of nothing else.

They were beset, and as if forced together, by that same old magnetic current which had united them in the first place over there in Paris. Or, they were like moths about the same candle—thrilled by a common flame—occasionally knocking into each other, softly, beyond the zone of light—and as likely, at any moment, to burn their wings so badly that they would never fly again.

Finally, they had ceased to make any pretense at playing the game at all. They were merely knocking the balls about, as an excuse for remaining where they were—although they knew how dangerous their situation was—and as a blind to the other guests in the big room, although these were not paying the slightest attention to them.

Minor was drinking himself to intoxication of Christie's presence. His face, being in the shadow, shone dimly white and intense. It bore a strained expression, almost of pain. Yet his eyes were glowing. Altogether, he had the look of a man wounded for a great cause and still bent on victory.

There was a look of pain in Christie's face as well—under her quick color, behind her smile, in the limpid flashes that came from her eyes when her own face was in the shadow.

The physical atmosphere of the big room was that of musty ale and tobacco smoke, of oak timbers and damp country. It was in just such an atmosphere that the forebears of all of us must have done a lot of their love-making—days when the weather kept them indoors—thus sending down through the ages that old disquieting heritage for conditions which are similar.

They said nothing which had any direct bearing on the situation—not for half an hour, at least. They knew each other too well, saw into each other too clearly, to permit of the ordinary falsifications of polite speech. They couldn't lie to each other. Had they spoken the truth it would doubtless have been ranked as gross immorality, according to all ordinary standards. As a matter of fact, their feelings were quite beyond the utility of words anyway.

Words don't exist in nature. Music does. So do actions. Minor might have expressed himself in the music of a roar, or of a groan, or of a battle-cry; but not in mere words. It was that way with Christie. She might have expressed herself in action—the action of complete surrender, for example; but there could have been no adequate expression in words.

When they did speak it was merely in the nature of an epilogue.

"I'm going away," said Minor.

"When?" asked Christie, catching her breath.

"I think I'll make it for this after-

noon." Minor was speaking with apparent calm. His training in the diplomatic service was proving its usefulness to him now. "I can be called to Washington — official business, you know, which can't wait."

But Christie had not been trained to the diplomatic service. Even a lot of her education as a young lady fit to move in good society had been sloughed off. She was just primitive woman. She couldn't resist the question:

"Why?"

Minor seemed to be perfectly content to have her ask the question. He knew, as well as she did, how unnecessary it was; but he was nothing loath to answer it, now that it had been asked. His face was set. He took a shot at the red ball. They were very close to each other. Her soft dress vibrated against him like the beating of wings.

"I'm leaving," he said softly, "because I'm tortured. I don't mind the pain. I love it. I'm going to worse pain in separating myself from you. But if I stay here I am apt to go quite completely out of my head—run amok —all that sort of thing."

It was Christie's shot. She made a miscue.

"Don't go."

"You should have held your cue like this," said Minor, in constrained tones; and, for three or four seconds, their hands were in burning contact. "There are times," he added, in a matter of fact way, "when one may disregard the conventions. I suppose that anyone would be justified in calling me a bounder for mentioning it while I am a guest at Gray Towers, but I love you so that I could commit murder, arson. . . . "

He made his own shot.

"And you love me like that," he breathed, in a gust of passion.

"Yes! Yes!" answered Christie, trying to focus her eyes on the cue-ball, but keeping her face high out of the light.

"Here in this house," said Minor, after a space, once more in apparent control of his nerves, "it would be far too easy for a pair of lunatics—to—make themselves—and others—miserable. There is something in the world for which I'd give my life, Christie. See! I'm marking up just as if I knew how many points I made."

"I don't want you to go," Christie quavered.

There was a phonograph far over in another corner of the room, and some of the younger guests were around it hilariously enjoying themselves. There fell a little period of comparative silence, then came the pulsing appeal of an erotic waltz.

"We live in a highly complicated age," mused Minor. "Gulliver passion is tied down by the threads of reason, and we torment him with music like that. At this moment, Gulliver is bellowing with rage. The threads begin to snap. Oh, Christie, I could crush you in my arms, stifle your lips!" He checked himself. "There," he added, "I've left you an easy shot."

Christie spent a long time in aiming.

"Will I see you—alone—before you go?" she asked, unsteadily, as she straightened up. "Will you be coming back— Oh, this is terrible! I love Claire. I wouldn't see her suffer—not for worlds."

"I think that I'll be going now," said Minor, with a hint of suffocation. "Good-bye, Christie!"

Her whispered response was barely audible.

"Good-bye!"

CHAPTER VIII

It is likely that both of them were aware that this was not to be the end. They may have thought that it was, but only in those threaded terms of reason to which Minor had referred, for Gulliver himself was shouting that he would not have it so.

As for Christie, she watched from an upper window, saw Minor enter one of the Gray Towers chariots of state—coachman and footman up in front, two lackeys up behind, all in full regalia. Minor, seated alone in the carriage, had

an air of being outnumbered, of being carried off a prisoner.

Christie sighed. What could one man do against the overpowering strength of convention as typified by those four menials in livery?

He was leaving with a simple suitcase. The rest of his baggage remained at Gray Towers to strengthen his pretense that he would be back in a day or so. As a matter of fact, he expected to telegraph for the rest of his things once he was safely in Washington and safe out of the reach of both William Scoll and the Vicomtesse de la Motte.

The Gray Towers station lay at the other end of three miles of winding road. There the passengers from Gray Towers flagged a way-train which carried them down through a valley of wooded parks and game-preserves to the main line of the railroad at a point where express trains stopped.

Christie followed Minor in spirit throughout this preliminary stage of his journey. A part of the time she did. The rest of the time—alone there in her room—she was pressing him close to her spirit-heart, saying over all the things which she would have said, giving him such proofs of love as she would have given.

One thing she envied him. He was, at least, definitely alone—could remain alone as long as he wished.

She herself felt as if she should like to remain alone forever—alone if not with him—tending her love for him like a vestal virgin tending the sacred flame. The idea that within a brief hour or so she should have to share the company of Scoll again, assume her standard rôle of light-hearted contentment, of gaiety, of complacence in his attachment for her and of a possible love for him—it was all hideous to her.

The line which separates human emotions is imperceptible to our grosser faculties. Under the intellectual microscope it is discovered to have no existence whatsoever. The brain can argue us into liking what we do not like, persuading us into supporting that which, straight off, we should have pronounced insupportable. It is only when we study the frontier line with the eye of the soul that it looms big and significant—that the country on one side appears to be altogether delectable and the country on the other but a phase of hell.

So Christie reflected. She was trying to blind her heart, see and hear only with her mind. Only thus—she was well aware of it—could she listen to Scoll's thousand and one hints and protestations of love, meet his gaze, answer him, in word, look and gesture, after the fashion conditions commanded her to answer him.

"You love him; and, why not?" gibbered her brain.

"You love but Minor," answered her heart.

As it so often happens when the battle grows too fierce for weak humanity, the grand referee—or Fate, or whatever it is—declared a truce. At least, it appeared like a truce to Christie.

The estate neighboring Gray Towers to the north was that of Bellevue, which likewise embraced a vast tract of land for the most part heavily wooded. There was a splendid highway linking up Gray Towers and Bellevue—and all the other estates for many miles around. Also, between Gray Towers and Bellevue there was a certain famous bridle-path—famous, because fifty or sixty years ago it used to be the favorite meeting-place of a certain Colonel Manners and a certain lady of the Scoll family. The meetings of the two eventually led to a rather serious shooting affair. Since then—long since—the Scolls and the Manners', who still owned Bellevue, had become thoroughly friendly again. Blood-feuds are all well enough—in Arabia.

There was an Audrey Manners who was to have been among the guests of Gray Towers. A couple of hours after Minor's departure, Audrey telephoned over to say that she was sick in bed and asking Christie to come over and pass the night with her.

All this is recounted as merely in-

cidental to the fact that Christie elected to go over to Bellevue by way of the bridle-path instead of the highway.

She loved to ride. Never in her life had she so wanted to be alone.

Scoll, reading her mood, perhaps, and anyway being held to Gray Towers by the business of being a host, let her get away along toward three o'clock in the afternoon. She was followed by a groom, who carried a light traveling-bag containing her few necessities for the night. She had promised to return early on the following morning.

The path was one of romantic beauty, winding through a rocky valley with the carefully conserved wilderness on either side, through ferny hollows, skirting cascades and silent pools. The nature of the path and the history of it both appealed to Christie as never before.

Hadn't the tragic lovers played the part of wisdom after all?

Now they were dead and gone—and as much at peace, no doubt, as the prelate who had buried them; but they hadn't lived in vain; they had lived; and that was more than could be said of many of the ultra-respectable.

The path, with all its windings, was about six miles long, four miles of which were included in the Gray Towers estate and the remaining two within the bounds of Bellevue. Running between the two estates was a country road which was little used. And on the crest of a low hill overlooking this road, but barely visible through the heavy forest, was a handsome bungalow or lodge which had originally been built as a shooting-box.

Shortly before arriving at this point, Christie dismissed the groom. Her real reason was that she was tired of being followed, that she wanted to make her solitude more perfect still, that she wanted to loiter, wanted to dream.

The groom was for carrying the bag ahead at all cost. But Christie smiled at him and took it herself.

"I'm almost there," she said. "Besides, there is a storm coming up and you have such a long way to go. You may tell Mr. Scoll that you saw me safely to Bellevue—which you did—and thank you, so much!"

The groom was a youth who had accompanied Christie on a number of rides. She felt that she could swear by his intelligence and devotion. She was to reflect on this—along with other things—a little later on.

Now altogether alone in surroundings which could have changed but little since Indian days, she surrendered herself to the full luxury of her solitude. She loitered. She listened to the heavy music of a waterfall, to the stirring of high branches, to the coaxing call of some unidentified bird.

It was not until she came out into the comparatively open space where the path followed the wagon-road that she noticed that the storm she had predicted was closer than she had thought. There was a sudden soughing through the trees, a quaver of lightning. It was not fear which moved Christie to do what she did. Rather it was a mere desire to prolong that delicious enjoyment of being alone. Possibly—you never can tell where a girl is concerned, and that girl deeply stirred—possibly, it was some deeper instinct.

At any rate, instead of continuing on across the road and into the Bellevue estate, bag in hand, she guided her horse up through the trees toward the old shooting-box.

As she reached it there was more lightning, more thunder. She had barely sheltered her horse under a shed and sought the broad front porch of the bungalow before she saw that someone else was headed in this direction, obviously in quest of shelter.

She felt a touch of fear, then of wonder, then of tumult which no word under heaven could express. She had recognized the man who was coming toward her.

It was Frederic Minor.

CHAPTER IX

He was almost up to the porch before he recognized her. There was a

small clearing in front of the porch. He stood there in the middle of it. He was overcome. He was looking at her as a faun might have looked at a nymph, never having seen a nymph before. He was silent. For a while he was motionless. He recovered himself enough, finally, to drag his hat from his head, but it was still several seconds before he could muster his power of speech.

"Christie!"

Christie was every bit as deeply moved as he was—more so, perhaps; for he could flee, she was trapped; he was man, she was woman.

"Fred, how in the world—"

A sort of bashfulness halted her words, almost took her breath away.

He saw that an explanation was in order, at any rate. Not that it mattered very much. Nothing mattered, apart from the fact that here were he and Christie Reynolds, together and alone, out in the woods, sheltered under the same thatch.

But was she alone? The question thrust him through with a red-hot pang of jealousy. It made him wince, turn his eyes away. It was only for a second. When his eyes came back to her, confirmed that first glance he had had of her, he knew that she was not only alone but that she had been expecting no one else. Dumb animals possibly have this power of speech without words. Man has it when the animal pants inside of him. Still, when he went on with what he had to say, his speech was as formal as if there had been someone else there to hear.

"They put me down at the station," he said. "I sent them away. A wrecking train passed not long afterward on its way up the line. The crew told me that there had been a minor accident—that there would be a delay of several hours—that it would be six o'clock this evening, at least, before there'd be a train. I started to take a walk. The road was beautiful. I—I wanted to be alone. I was down there when I saw the storm coming up. This place looked deserted."

He spoke like a man at the end of his strength, or one who is suffering from a touch of stage-fright.

As Christie listened to him, she was aware that her own strength was deserting her. She had trouble with her breathing. Her knees were wilty. She looked about for a place to sit down. Against the side of the house there was a long, low, broad seat with a corduroy cushion.

There was something like a moment of oblivion. Then, there was Minor seated at her side.

She looked out into the darkening woods. There was no mistaking the signs, either psychical or meteorological. There was a storm coming up—a double storm. Out there, the trees were waving and the shadows were getting black; there were flashings and growlings; and then lurid periods, uncanny though brief, when all natural things were seen in an unnatural aspect by an unfamiliar light. It all symbolized perfectly what was going on in the hearts of both of them.

Like a swimmer trying to keep cool in a perilous reach of surf, Christie, in the midst of this present tumult, stated the circumstances of her own presence at the bungalow. She did this calmly. But the effect of this was not such as she had foreseen. It left her in a condition of greater stress than ever, and she could see that Minor had been similarly affected.

During that calm recital of hers, it had developed in the consciousness of each of them that through no planning of their own, and in spite of their efforts to do what the world considered to be the rightful thing, some greater power had willed otherwise.

It was becoming apparent that their rendezvous was perfect. No human ingenuity could have improved it. Each had an unassailable alibi. At Gray Towers, there was every reason to believe that Minor was well on his way to Washington. If he wanted to he could go back to the station and get the suit-case he had left there, but even this was scarcely necessary. Even if it was

subsequently learned that he had missed the expected train, no one could conceivably imagine him walking this far back into the lonely woods. As for Christie, the groom would soon be reporting her safe arrival at Bellevue, while the family at Bellevue would, naturally, infer that she had put off her visit on account of the approaching storm.

While each of them was silently reviewing the situation as thus developed —and perfectly aware of what the other was thinking about—there befell another incident which urged them to linger where they were and make the best of it—or the worst of it. Nature is apt to be importunate—like any female thing—once she sees a sign of yielding.

There was a telephone line which, following the bridlepath in a general way, likewise crossed the road not far from the bungalow. Both Minor and Christie must have known that this was the telephone line connecting Gray Towers and Bellevue. For an interval they had been sitting there side by side, gazing out ahead of them as if hypnotized.

There came a gust of wind. Like an invisible hand this twisted a branch from a dead chestnut tree and flailed the telephone line to the earth.

There followed a greater blackness, then a deluge of rain, then a fork of lightning which left them almost blinded after the spectacle of a million glittering drops.

"Did you see that wire go down?" asked Minor.

His voice came to Christie like an echo of the thunder, as of something far away, as of something from another world. Yet, there he was right at the side of her. Involuntarily, she had thrust herself against him when the lightning flashed. She was grateful that he was there. She was grateful, too, that he had not profited by the occasion to take her into his arms. She was in a state bordering on panic. She felt desperately the need of protection. She yearned for his protection. And yet she would have dreaded his violence.

"Yes," she answered.

"It means," said Minor, "that there will be no communication between Gray Towers and Bellevue this night. The storm means that there will be no other guests leaving Gray Towers before tomorrow. And none will arrive. The footman told me that." He seemed to be stating the case to convince himself. He seemed to be thinking aloud. His voice fell as he came to the inevitable conclusion: "I'm here. No one knows it—can ever know it—but you—and me."

He didn't look at Christie. He dropped his head into his hands.

CHAPTER X

CHRISTIE looked out into the storm. She had a slight recoil of fear. She looked at Minor's bowed head, and the fear became a tenderness. She touched his hair, cautiously.

"What shall we do?" she asked.

The rain became a deluge. Through the narrow valley the wind charged in frantic gusts.

"I'll go," he said.

He straightened up. They were sitting very close together. She gave him a furtive glance, saw that he meant what he had just said. Her breath quickened.

"You'll get all wet," she ventured, weakly.

"That won't hurt," he answered; then added: "after this."

Christie was absorbed. She felt as if she would like to weep. She didn't know whether to consider herself the victim of a tragic injustice or the recipient of a nameless good fortune. If she had to obey the social commandments, it was cruel that Minor should thus be thrust back upon her. On the other hand, if she wished to follow the lead of that one-time lady of the Scolls, then indeed had Fate been kind.

She suddenly looked around. Minor had left her, was already at the far end of the porch, was on the point of step-

ping out into the rain. There was something about the huddled appearance of his shoulders which indicated that this was no mere acting on his part. To Christie he appeared infinitely touching, he made an infinite appeal. She rushed to detain him. She caught his hand in hers, drew him back and around.

They stood there, face to face.

"Don't go," she whispered.

"I was going because I love you so," he explained softly, steadily.

"Because you think it would be better?"

They looked into each other's eyes, honestly, with no thought of deception. After thought, he shook his head.

"I think it would be better if I remained—for a while," he said.

"Oh, do you?"

There was a sort of girlish relief in Christie's words. She was by all odds too sincere for anything theatrical.

"Folks are always making a lot of trouble for themselves," said Minor, with a touch of wistful humor, "by not accepting the circumstances God gives them. He's answered the prayers of our hearts. We wanted to be together. We are together. Had we had a dream to come true, it would have been this—a cottage in the woods, and no one there but just you and me."

Christie was tremulous. Her fingers tightened on his. She drew him along with her as she returned along the porch. There were tears in her eyes by this time. Her pink lips were parted. She looked exalted, tender—had something of that look in her face which one occasionally sees in the face of a bride as she marches from the altar.

"Let's have tea," said Minor.

"Oh," said Christie, "wouldn't that be wonderful!"

Minor tried a door of the bungalow. It was unlocked. There was nothing surprising about this. Thieves are rare in the remote sections, and should they pass they would have ample leisure and solitude to break any lock.

The door admitted them to what was obviously a living-room. Very dusty and unkempt it was, giving no evidence of recent occupancy. Beyond this was what was evidently the dining-room of the establishment. Then, off this to the left, was a kitchen. Here alone was any sign that someone had been in the bungalow not so very long before. There was an alcohol lamp in good condition, half-filled, its wick moist and ready for lighting. There was a coffee-pot with fairly fresh grounds in it. There were a number of biscuits about—the hot bread beloved of campers—which couldn't have been there for much more than a day or two.

"What's that old story," said Minor, "about the house in the woods, and the three bears?— This is it."

"What if they should return?" whispered Christie.

Her shiver was only half affectation. The other half of it was sincere enough.

They stood there listening intently like a pair of children. No sound came to them at all except that of the storm.

"I'm going to shout," Minor announced.

He did so—several times. There came no response except that hollow, ghostly echo of emptiness which all deserted houses seem to possess in common. Gradually, in the moments that followed, their trepidation left them. They were getting used to their surroundings. They entered into the spirit of this the oldest game on earth. They were "playing house."

Despite its neglected appearance, the bungalow was not only well furnished, but well stocked with provisions of sorts—tea, coffee, sugar, condensed milk, tinned biscuits and meats. There was running water.

Gradually, unremarked, a sense of domestic tranquillity descended upon them. It was almost as if this were the natural order of things, as if it had always been so, always would be. But naked, primitive man still stalks about under the conventional clothing. It requires but an accident to strip him,

throw him back to where he was ten or twenty centuries ago.

It was more or less like that with the flimsy domestic tegument that now covered the native passions of this man and this woman.

Christie, who rode astride, had been wearing a habit the essential features of which were boots, a short divided skirt, a long coat, a silk shirt with a stock. She had put aside the coat, rolled up her sleeves and then had taken off her stock. Her sailor hat she had discarded from the first.

At the running tap she had washed her hands and her face like a boy—or a workman. That was before tea. And Minor had made an honest effort to keep his eyes off of her while she was doing it, too.

But they had strengthened their habit of looking at each other by the time the meal had finished. Almost all of their initial embarrassment was gone. There was still what sea-goers call a ground-swell—telling of a storm gone by or on the way. But they were riding even this in safety by this time.

So they believed.

They had carried the tea things back to the kitchen, Minor helping, forever treading on Christie's heels, conscious, perhaps, that this happiness was too great to last; and Christie letting him, perfectly aware in her own heart, most likely, that she was becoming more and more reckless every minute—as is the way of women when they feel (rather disdainfully) that they are with a man they can wholly trust.

Once more she let the cold, clear water from the tap flow over her hands and arms. She dried them on a paper napkin, then, increasingly absorbed in the mystic cult of the toilet, she raised her arms and loosened her hair. As she did so she heard a muffled exclamation—something of a sigh, something of a groan—a sort of stifled "Oh!"

She turned swiftly. She found herself looking at Minor, but something rushed up out of her heart to tell her that this was no such Minor as she had ever seen before—not even that time when he kissed her during the midnight mass in the Madeleine, not even a little while ago when they surprised each other in front of the bungalow.

He was shaking and tense, smiling slightly, his face in a glow, his eyes brilliant and hypnotic.

Christie wasn't tense. Just the contrary. She felt as if she were helpless—helpless against the impulse to creep into his arms.

CHAPTER XI

"Oh," said Christie, in a breath scarcely louder than a whisper, "this is terrible!"

She stood there, plastic, as quivering as a flame, and as ready to be wafted this way or that, yet burning strong, a power for destruction or creation.

"No," said Minor.

The words were meaningless in themselves, but for Christie and Minor they seemed to contain everything that speech was capable of by way of warning and persuasion. There was a slight readjustment of the situation—a slight letting down on Minor's part, a slight recovery of strength for Christie. They were still looking at each other, into each other. He was white. She wasn't blushing. There was just a sort of radiance about her, beautiful and modest.

"Christie," he whispered, "is there such a thing as—a man and a woman—made for each other—by God Almighty—and brought together—by His decree?"

Christie's pink lips had been parted. She brought them together. Her eyes glowed moist.

"I'm trying—to see right," he pleaded, thickly.

"You have your career to think about," she answered with an effort. "It's going to be such a wonderful career. I shall be so proud of you!"

"Your saying that," said Minor, with desperate conviction, "simply makes me love you all the more."

"But Claire—she would make you

the better wife," Christie averred, breathing hard.

"You haven't answered my first question."

"She loves you so," said Christie, bravely. She was arguing with herself rather than with Minor. "It would kill her if anything came between you and her. And—oh, Fred!—that's the answer to your question."

There followed a period of rather concentrated thinking for both of them. No man likes to put passion—or what passes for such—second to reason, especially in his dealings with a woman. Most men will keep up a semblance of passion even after reason has fully asserted itself. But it was different in the present instance. Minor actually had so much respect for Christie's intelligence that he could find it in him to be honest with her.

"I suppose that you are right," he admitted. "It was madness—the mere obsession of holding you in my arms—of surrendering thought of all else."

"I love you too much for that," said Christie, in a small voice. "I can't let you—do something—that you'd regret."

They looked at each other dizzily during an interval of silence.

"You're a wonderful girl, Christie."

"Oh, I so always want you to think so. It will mean so much to me. You know that I love you, Fred—that I love you more dearly than anything else in this world—or the next. I feel now as if my heart were breaking. Fred! Fred! What if we did—what if we did—"

After all that she had said, this sudden revulsion on Christie's part filled Minor with a pity that was boundless, strengthened his sense of chivalry as nothing else could have done. Before he could speak Christie rushed on:

"I don't know what to do. I don't know what to say. I love you so. I've loved you ever since that night in the Madeleine. It can't be wicked. It's something in my heart that's stronger than I am, and I didn't put it there."

There was a slight movement of the muscles about her lips which might have presaged an emotional breakdown, but she shook her head, pressed a hand to her heart, controlled herself.

Oddly enough, as Minor stood there and looked at her—it was a mere, revealing flash, and yet as long as eternity—it was not her physical beauty that appealed to him, great as this was. It was her weakness that appealed to him, stirred an instinct within him which was chivalrous to a degree—almost paternal. This was not a glorious young woman ready to cast herself into his arms. It was merely the daughter of the notorious Judge Reynolds, brother of the scarcely less notorious Thurston Reynolds.

"Christie," he said, with sober and gentle seriousness, "it can't be."

"It was to make you happy."

Minor's heart began to sing within him.

"What you suggest," he said, "is exceedingly beautiful. I am so grateful to you that I could get right down on my knees here now in front of you and say my prayers to you. It's the memory of this day, Christie, dear, that will go through life with us, decorating our empty days and blessing our dreams. But you and I—my—my beloved—will go our ways. You have a splendid husband-to-be in Scoll—rich, generous, devoted to you and to you alone. I have, as you said, my career to think about. No man higher than a brute lives for love. It's his career that he lives for, and it's you who have reminded me of the fact when I most needed to be reminded of it."

Christie put up her arms and wound her luxuriant but facile hair into a shimmering helmet—a modern Minerva. But she looked weak.

"Come on," Minor commanded. "We'll go on into the living-room and talk some more about this thing, and about ourselves, At least, we may talk."

Christie, obedient, stepped forward. He made no movement to touch her as she started past. That would have been too dangerous. Nor had Christie any thought of such a thing. Only, just in-

side the dining-room there was a grass carpet with the end of it slightly rolled up. With no thought at all of where she was stepping—blind to the world, indifferent—Christie caught her foot in this.

She let out a little laugh, a little cry, she threw out her arms. She was no longer Minerva. She was more like an awkward little girl.

And it was like that that Minor caught her.

Almost before he knew it, he was holding her supple weight and warmth in his arms, against his breast. They were as if cast into the same crucible. She swung backward, lissom, with her face up and her throat exposed. Her eyes were half closed, and there was such a delicious curl to her lips that it was to haunt him for years to come. His nervous hands were as steel and yet almost optical in their sensitiveness.

There was an inarticulate effort at speech—as rudimentary, and yet as heavy with meaning, no doubt, as the sounds that Adam and Eve may have made when they first embraced.

There was a sense of soaring. There was no weight. But a pressure which was like that of a thousand atmospheres and yet which did not hurt was pressing them together; closer and closer, and closer yet; until the whole universe, and all the life processes, and immortality, and everything, had become but one lingering, luxurious, killing contact.

Christie's intellect had ceased its work utterly. She had become but a nucleus of sensation, like some primordial germ from whence a whole new creation might spring.

But Minor's intellect had not ceased to work. He also was a miracle of dawning sensation such as he had never known; but over this—high, high up, like an eagle over a valley—hung discernment, watchful, memorizing. He knew it when his lips found hers, he knew it when he took them away.

There was a panting sigh, very brief.

Then the two of them had sprung back to earth again, and had landed on their feet. Both had heard something at the same instant—startling, terrifying, almost. It was the sound of footsteps. Someone was coming downstairs from the bungalow's upper floor.

CHAPTER XII

THEIR recovery was perfect. Five, six seconds after those ominous sounds broke in upon their universe of silence, they were as outwardly calm as if nothing untoward had occurred. Minor had his training as a diplomat to help him. Christie needed no help. She was just a woman, that's all. She put up a hand to see that her hair was all right, then touched her throat, adjusting her waist somewhat. Both she and Minor turned in the direction of the sound with twin masks of surprise and polite expectancy.

It was Uncle Quincy.

He paused the instant he saw them, glimpsed them over with an expression which they could not understand, then headed toward them with manifest pleasure.

"First, I wish to welcome you," he said. "Then I want to congratulate you. Don't let it frighten you. I heard every word that passed between you."

Minor was dazed. He was only vaguely aware that Uncle Quincy was shaking him by the hand. Christie had flushed, but there was a proud tilt to her head as Uncle Quincy seized her hand in turn and pressed it gallantly to his lips.

"Miss Reynolds and I met here quite by accident," Minor began. He was interrupted by a smile and a gesture from Uncle Quincy.

"As I am already aware," said the amateur scientist.

"And," Minor continued, "I'm quite ready, if Miss Reynolds says the word, to break my engagement, make amends—"

"What!" Uncle Quincy exploded. "Do you mean to say this—in good faith, sir—after all that has been already said? You two have acted most

admirably in the circumstances. You love each other, and yet you recognize that this is no basis for marriage. Love, as a basis for marriage, is all right for savages, all right for the masses. But with us, it isn't considered—how shall I put it?—exactly nice."

They found themselves strolling together into the living-room, and thence, presently, the rain having abated, on out to the porch. It was becoming increasingly evident to both Minor and Christie that Uncle Quincy Scoll, Esq., knew less than he thought he did about their relations with each other. He knew nothing, at at any rate, about that kiss they had exchanged. And their paramount sensation, perhaps, was one of joyful peace.

They had been in great danger. This danger they had escaped. It had been a double danger—that of breaking the commandments and then getting caught at it. Altogether, there was reason to be grateful.

By and by the rain had stopped altogether.

Long before this time, the conversation had become one largely of polite formality—Uncle Quincy doing most of the talking—for, after all, he was getting old—about his scientific pursuits, ethnological and entomological, and how he preferred roughing it here in the bungalow, sleeping by day and wandering by night; the while Christie and Minor merely listened or made polite comments.

There was ample time for Minor to get back to the station and catch his delayed train. There was ample time for Christie to get over to Bellevue for her slightly retarded visit.

So, presently, while Uncle Quincy looked on approvingly, Christie Reynolds and Frederic Minor, both in their right senses and knowing this to be the end of their episode, bade each other a cordial, though formal, farewell.

(*The End*)

THE BEATIFIC VISION

STAR-DUST and the music of the spheres. . . . Cherubim caroling in celestial choirs, seraphim floating through the rainbow colors of heaven. . . . Night and the embers dully glowing and the sound of fog-horns on the Bay. . . . Old loves remembered and the fragrance of jasmine at twilight. . . . Tears for the youth that has gone and the dreams of youth. . . . Drunk again!

MARRIAGE is a solemn compact between a man and a woman—too solemn for the woman and too compact for the man.

CONSIDER the wisdom of the bee: to choose between two women, introduce them.

A WOMAN may forget to remember but she never forgets to forget.

WHOM THE GODS LOVE

By Myron Zobel

THERE was once a child born, of such precocity that the like of it had never before been seen upon the earth. None but the parents of very young children will believe this. Fourteen minutes already had it mocked the census taker before thoughts of the future began to usurp the mind of its mother. Then her fancy flew to presidential possibilities and other matters of maternal moment.

"I must prepare," she mused aloud, "for the worst. There will be colic, whooping-cough, chicken-pox, hay-fever, measles and maybe tonsilitis, mumps and diphtheria." She glanced down sympathetically at the little mite in her arms, its intelligent brow puckered intently, its huge red ears alert to catch these dismal tidings of the future.

"Poor child," she sighed, "he will have to be inoculated, medicated and vaccinated—and wear adhesive plaster to hold his ears down. When he is old enough, I shall have his tonsils and appendix removed and his teeth straightened. He shall be schooled in self-denial and forewarned against the evils of chewing gum, strong drinks, betting, tobacco and pinochle.

"He shall marry the girl I choose for him and live here in the house with us.

"No doubt he will have to suffer many disillusionments: lose his faith in humanity; forsake his principles; lament the decadence in Art, Letters and Morals; and lend his support to the Suffrage Movement.

"In old age he will grow pessimistic and grouchy. Gout will afflict him and ague drag him to his couch. Countless worries will whiten his hairs, has not his wife's mother pulled them out before that.

"His poor relations—provided he sufficiently stifle his nobler qualities to gain riches—will hang around with honeyed words waiting for him to drop off and when that happy day arrives will weep crocodile tears and wear black clothing to show how dearly they loved—his money."

She looked down with a sigh at her hapless infant.

There it lay with its wise little face screwed up in a sardonic smile, its large ears still keen; but the heart that should have pumped its way through that long, long tangle of troubles lay quite still.

The Precocious One, seeing life as it is, had chosen.



A MAN will kiss a girl he detests, because she expects it. A woman will kiss a man she detests, because there is no other man to kiss.



A ROMANCE OF DIGESTION

By Robert McBlair

I

WHEN Henry Augustus Colgate, Jr.—man of society and millions—left his office one morning and saw in the corridor Molly Newell crying before the closed door of Judson & Stone, stockbrokers, he experienced an emotion that was a novelty to his bosom. This emotion was that of pity, and as he slowly neared the girl and noticed how truly feminine and pretty she looked, it began to assert its kinship to a richer relation.

Henry was in fine physical trim. He had not eaten of his *bête noir—paté de foie gras*—for nearly sixty days, and as a consequence his pale eye was bright and the blood coursed with comparative briskness through his somewhat anæmic frame. His emotions, therefore, were more alive than usual, and answered readily to this stimulus. Yet not only pity, but other feeling, was likely to be akin to love in the presence of Molly Newell. She had a self-assertive yet properly retiring figure that somehow evaded the tailor-made insignia of civilization and bade one think of fauns fleeing the satyr across the blossom-strewn fields of Greece. Her hair curled wilfully upon a neck like a slender Corinthian column and turned into a warm brown living coronet that would have earned her the envy of Juno.

These qualities of delight to the eye had proven, however, scarcely more to her advantage in the heart of our modern civilization than had beauty been to the advantage of the fauns she hinted of. True, there was the big-chested, red-haired Larry O'Toole, who wanted her to marry him; but as nice as Larry was, Molly had not been able to bring herself to decide to become a contractor's wife, even though Larry had enough friends down in Fourteenth street to assure a continuance of prosperity.

For Molly had her dreams.

Not for nothing had she read the society columns of the New York *Journal;* not for nothing had she absorbed the output of the *Cosmopolitan* serial writers; not for nothing was she endowed with the Celtic imagination. America, she knew, was a land of swift ascents, and to scale the dizziest heights, she believed, there was needed but courage and opportunity. From stenographer to Duchess was but a step. It was necessary only to find the Duke.

And here is the romance of this chance meeting in the hall, for Henry Augustus Colgate, Jr., also had his dreams, albeit they were of a somewhat different variety. He boasted of forebears who had hanged witches three centuries ago; his fame was in the social register over two paragraphs of description; and he was deferred to by every head waiter between the Polo Grounds and the Battery. It would have been difficult, therefore, for his dreams to look upward, and so, as he had to dream, they looked downward perforce.

He was a man of simple tastes—simple tastes in ideas, in clothes, in food, in literature and in dreams. He liked stories in which the heroine was very, very beautiful, and in which the young hero won her love somewhere near the end. If the heroine was a poor girl

(but of honest parents), or if she was in distress, it made the tale all the more likable if the wealthy, manly hero extricated her from her perils and her environment. After reading a tale of this sort he would often find himself moved, and he would imagine with no little pleasure various maidenly predicaments with himself as the brave, manly, generous, affectionate and appreciated rescuer. In such moments he would conclude that he was a person of very strong feelings and chivalrous impulses.

These imaginings brightened what might otherwise have become the tedium of his daily life. He spent at least an hour at the office on every day except Friday, Saturday, Sunday, Monday and Tuesday. These off-days, in summer, he put in at week-ends at one or another friend's country place, or at his own; that is, save during July and August, when he went to his Adirondack camp. In winter, he spent most of his time at the club, where Canfield, bridge and billiards vied with breakfast, luncheon, dinner and first-nights for the occupancy of his waking hours.

"Why don't you go out more and see something of the ladies?" an intimate friend had once urged upon him. "Take some of these débutantes out to parties. Of course you don't want to hear them talk, but it's a treat to *watch* them talk. There's nothing so delightfully rejuvenating as the freshness and innocence and coloring of these eighteen-year-old buds. That's why you see men of sixty-five, like old Conrad, at all of the dances. They are drinking at the fountain of youth. And then," he had added with a grin, "maybe you will find yourself a wife!"

Henry had laughed off the suggestion then, and had evaded the implied inquiry. But in his heart he knew the answer. He agreed as to the freshness and coloring of the average débutante in New York, but he questioned her innocence. Experience had taught him that underneath the girlish coiffure and behind that baby stare were going on calculations as to his income and how much could be done with it that would have been a credit to the business manager of his investments. He had noticed a certain brightening of expression and veering of conversation that always greeted his approach, and when he told a joke he could never be sure how much of the girlish laughter had in mind a mother's admonition to "be nice to Mr. Colgate." In short, he was suffering from bachelor's gout: to be cornered by any daughter meant to him clearing the decks for action and nailing the flag to the mast; and the sight of any mother was a signal for lights out, and a prow turned towards the south.

This custom of retiring into his shell in the presence of the dominant sex enslaved him in a diffidence that mastered him whenever he ventured forth. So now he walked past Molly Newell. But his steps slowed and before he had gone very far he turned and came back.

A little blue ribbon running through lace and things under a diaphanous, spotless white waist, a bit of delicately flushed cheek, and the back of a pretty head, made up his impression of the personality that had stirred his interest. The girl's blue serge coat was under her arm and a silver mesh-bag dangled from her wrist as she covered her face with both hands. As Henry approached her again his courage began to ooze away, but the girl's shoulders trembled in a long drawn breath and tipped the scales of fate.

"Pardon me," he faltered, "but—ah—it would seem that you are—ah—weeping."

The girl turned her head until one eye, somewhat the worse for use, but of a beautiful violet hue, was visible. This eye regarded him carefully, from head to toe. Then its owner moved a little away from him and opened the silver mesh-bag. She took out a circular powdery thing, and a small mirror, and between little catches of her breath began applying the former to her nose.

"It occurred to me," Henry con-

tinued, "that I might be able to be of some assistance." How like the books this was beginning, he thought.

The owner of the violet eyes turned and looked at him again, her pretty mouth in a sort of pout.

"You don't look like a masher," she remarked thoughtfully.

Henry flushed. "I can assure you," he began with dignity, "that if—"

"You look like a gentleman," she interrupted, somewhat hastily; "like a real gentleman."

Henry flushed a little more, but this time with pleasure. To embark upon a romantic adventure incognito, so to speak, and be recognized at the outset as the genuine article was not displeasing to him. Poor Henry! He could not know that she always left her door ajar to see him pass, that she followed his every movement in the *Evening Journal's* Sunday letter from the mythical Judith to her equally mythical chum Jane, that under her mattress—in part for warmth, in part for safekeeping—were half a dozen "magazine-section" articles computing his income and visualizing with splotchy photographs the material evidences thereof.

II

"You are in trouble," Henry stated, with, for him, unusual acumen.

Her lip trembled. "I've—I've just been fired. And—and I don't know—what I am going to do."

A manly instinct of protection expanded Henry's rather narrow chest.

"Tell me all about it," he said comfortingly. "My motor is outside. We'll take a ride and see if we can't fix things up. Every cloud, you know," he added brightly, "has a silver lining."

They went down in the elevator and walked out of the building together, Henry, although reminding himself that whatever a Colgate did was right, feeling decidedly self-conscious. He imagined that the elevator boy, the starter, the clerk at the cigar stand, the passers in and out, were giving him and his companion their interested attention; and worst of all—he imagined that they smiled.

As Henry appeared in the doorway, his chauffeur hastily left a convivial group, and the machine—a long lead-gray limousine with the Colgate coat of arms on the door—rolled from the cab stand in the middle of the street and up to the curb.

"A drive, William," said Henry.

He helped her in. In a moment they had left behind the clamorous curb brokers in Broad street and had turned for a block into the narrow canyon of Wall; then, where the old church raises a feeble cross amid the idols of copper and gold and oil and steel that surround it, they turned again, and threaded the traffic of Broadway up towards Fifth avenue and Riverside Drive.

It must not be supposed that a man may isolate himself from all contact with femininity and by so doing evade indefinitely all of the dangers attendant upon being a member of our bi-sexual race. Some philosophers think that precaution for man or maid is useless, and that everyone must, late or soon, have his poignant pang.

However this may be, the fact is that according to the law of attraction—discovered by Sir Isaac Newton and elaborated and applied by Madame La Pompadour—a falling object is willed eventually to land, and its fall may only temporarily be delayed. And in truth, La Pompadour evolved the additional principle that, if the object be a man, the longer the fall is postponed the harder that fall will be.

These scientific considerations may go far towards explaining why Henry found it so difficult to keep before his mind that this was only a stenographer in the car with him, and that he was interested solely in helping her to find another job. Violet shafts of light disconcerted him whenever her eyes met his, and when she looked away he found his attention straying from her speech and lingering on the soft curve of chin and cheek, the whiteness of her

arms through the transparent sleeves, the graceful lines of her figure, and the insistent vitality that stained her cheeks pink and her lips red and that seemed to vibrate through her relaxed body as the machine rolled smoothly along.

"Just because I got down late a few times!" she told him. "It was Judson that did it. He's an old beast—that's what he is!"

"A beast," agreed Henry vaguely, watching her mouth as she talked. "You are not too cool without your coat, are you?"

"No. And jobs are awfully hard to get just now, too. And I owe some bills—and I don't know *what* father will say."

"Ah! You have a father?" inquired Henry. "What is his—er—occupation?"

"He is—" she hesitated. But he would have to find it out sometime, if she made the hoped for progress with him; and if she did not— "He is a police officer," she finished truthfully.

"Ah!" murmured Henry, "a splendid profession. Protectors of people's property from Anarchists and—er—Futurists. No, they are painters, aren't they? Wanted to be a policeman myself once—long time ago when I was a youngster." He rambled on, only half aware that he was talking nonsense. His eyes were on the white hand resting near him and he wondered what would happen if he should touch it.

A grand thing, this democracy of ours, he thought as the girl rattled on. Out of the people—from families one never heard of, you know—rise up the commanding figures of the times—the Edisons—the James J. Hills, the Abraham Lincolns. Yes—take Lincoln. His beginnings were even lower than—well, than a policeman, for instance; and yet he is worshipped. And so it is a fact in democracy that a policeman—the man who raises his hand when your motor must stop, you know—could father a perfect creature like this, and that within a decade she might preside over the destinies of thousands, or become embodied in one of the best families of the country. She might, for example, be a Mrs. Henry Augustus Colgate, Jr.

This last thought hit him with something of a shock. It was a pleasurable shock; it electrified him; and he looked at her now with a more personal interest and with a sense of excitement.

"What do you say to having luncheon?" he asked her.

"That would be lovely!" she enthused.

III

ALTHOUGH he did not notice it, she ate the way he ate, mouthful for mouthful. Her embarrassed flush he took to come from a sense of his nearness, and his heart sang. Here at last was someone who liked him for himself, who didn't even know that he was rich. After lunch they lingered and talked while he smoked. Here was a girl who didn't rave to him about books, or about art; she didn't even mention the war, nor did she say that after it was over people would "see America" instead of going abroad. Instead, he noticed that she was delighted with simple things—the self-designed monogram on his cigarettes, the way he talked, the speed at which he once had driven a car.

She looked at him in frank admiration, she deferred to his opinions—more, she was interested in them—and she laughed at his jokes. Add to this that she was disturbingly beautiful to look upon, that Henry had not chatted alone with a girl for a matter of years, and one has the explanation of a seemingly paradoxical bit of psychology, and of why Henry Augustus Colgate, Jr., considered going to the proletariat for a wife.

One must consider also that Henry was in tip-top physical condition. Like a well-oiled machine, with a new carbureter and freshly boiled spark plugs, he was developing more speed than was guaranteed by the factory. In the chronicles of the romance of men not enough attention has been given to this

over-speed that is developed by the perfectly adjusted human mechanism, and to the acceleration of the emotions and of the imagination that results when this surplus energy is not translated into action. The interested investigator may find excellent material at vacation resorts, where he will see the recuperated and idle human machines developing an over-speed that results in marriages—or divorces—as the case may be. And many a married man might look back to the condition of his health at a certain period for the explanation of something which has long been a puzzle to him.

The head waiter shook his head with a sorrowful cynicism as Henry and the girl passed out into the street. He had looked upon Henry as representing a minute and unique division of mankind, and now, with his one remaining ideal shattered, he pocketed the crisp bills with a murmured "They're all alike!" reaffirmed in his ancient conviction that old Dollar Bill is the only one who doesn't disappoint you.

But Henry, oblivious of everything except the girl, took her home, or within a block or two of it, where she made him put her down—and exacted from her the promise that she would lunch with him the next day, when they would talk over the matter of finding her another position.

The next day they lunched together, but the talk again, somehow, was of personalities, the matter of a new job being the nebulous background for their conversation, a tacit linking together, so to say, of their twin souls.

IV

THAT night Henry lay long awake with hands clasped under his head, his lean face relaxing now and then into a smile at the recollection of some happy phrase of his or humorous turn of talk. And as he lay there he made plans for the morrow, for that was to be the crowning day of their acquaintanceship. They were to dine together, and to-morrow he would let himself go. No inhibition or prohibition should enter in to mar the perfection of this evening. The menu should have everything that he liked—yes, *paté de foie gras,* come Dick or devil! And joy unalloyed should hold revel in the soul and stomach of Henry Colgate. He fell asleep counting off the drinks and delicacies, and dreamed of riding a goose-liver over the moon in search of a long lost princess.

And the evening of the morrow was even more wonderful than he had planned. With a queer inversion of his life-long taste, he sent her American Beauties instead of orchids, and in the private dining-room across the little table she shone like a goddess in the flesh. The white arms were bare, and he found that she had beautiful shoulders. He ate everything that he liked, even the *paté.* He knew that he shouldn't; but there was something in the delicate admixture of flavorous goose-livers and consummate baking, of butter and good bread, combined with black coffee (which, in defiance of his breeding, he took with his dinner), that shook the foundations of Henry's will and drew his soul to his palate. Then when the tactful Jerry had served the *créme de menthe* and coffee and had departed, he captured the warm little hand that lay on the table—and she did not take it away.

It is to be doubted that Henry himself could give an accurate account of the ride home in the motor. Her head was on his shoulder—this he is sure of, for he remembers an ineffable fragrance and little stray hairs that tickled his nose. But the end of that ride is graven on his mind. For then she told him good-night, and then she kissed him. It was not an amateur's kiss; but whether Henry thought of that, he knew it was not an ordinary one; it was a kiss raised to the *n*th power, and when she was gone he took up the speaking tube with his mind made up.

"Home, William," he commanded; "I must speak to mother before she retires."

V

Mrs. Colgate was still resplendent in an evening gown of pale gray, and diamonds, when Henry was admitted to her room by the chic but rather homely French maid. Her hair, through the judicious application of bluing, was of a steely whiteness which rather accentuated the formidable impression made by her height and width and by her almost masculine features, and if her skin was of a grayish hue it was not from lack of care, but due rather to the same anæmic tendency which she had transmitted to her son. She was seated at the dressing-table and welcomed him with a smile.

"Ah, Henry! Come in, my dear. I have not seen you since—let me see—the Hammersmiths' reception. Nearly two months. We must arrange to be together more, my dear; but my duties are *so* exacting. These committees! These teas! These receptions! But it must be something unusual which has caused you to look me up at this hour. What is it, my son?" She picked up her lorgnette and looked him over carefully.

"It *is* something unusual, mother," responded Henry, trying to affect a nonchalance. He took out a platinum case and offered her a cigarette. "At least," he added, after holding a match for her, "it is an unusual thing for me. I am—er—going to be married."

"Henry Colgate!" she cried. "You are going to do what?"

"Be married," repeated Henry simply.

"But," she exclaimed, "I did not know you even *knew* a girl. For heaven's sake, who is she?"

"Her name," said Henry, "is Molly."

"Molly! You mean Molly Fothergill? Well, I am relieved. Their family is quite as good as ours, and whereas she is not a pretty girl and they aren't very well-to-do, still—"

"It isn't Molly Fothergill, mother," interrupted Henry; "it's Molly Newell."

"Molly Newell! I've never heard of her. Where did you meet her? Who are her people?"

"Her father is a policeman," said Henry. "I don't know what her mother is—or was."

Mrs. Colgate took up a hand mirror and examined her countenance attentively. She put it down and turned to Henry, lifting her lorgnette again as if to make sure that he was really there.

"Would you mind repeating what you just said?" she asked.

"Her father is a policeman," Henry repeated.

"Henry Colgate," said his mother, "do you mean to tell me that you, a Colgate, are so far forgetting yourself as to think for a moment of marrying the daughter of a *policeman*—a man who makes his living by walking a beat all night!"

"He doesn't at all," objected Henry, "he's a *traffic* policeman!"

Mrs. Colgate dropped her hands in her lap and expelled her breath as an expression of astonishment and hopelessness beyond speech.

"Very well," she said presently, "I wash my hands of the affair. I am going to Palm Beach to-morrow on the two o'clock train. I *advise* you to come with me. If you don't, however; if you can so far forget the obligation you owe to your family name and your unborn children as to commit this ridiculous act and isolate yourself from the people you and your family have always known, I am done with you. That's all I have to say."

She turned from him, and with hands that trembled a little—for in this crisis the feeling of motherhood was struggling hard for consideration—she began to take off her collar of diamonds as a signal for his dismissal.

"I am sorry, mother." He stood there a moment uncertainly. Then left her and went to his room. He was buoyant and resolute beyond his wont; for the first time in years his faculties were gathered in concert and fortified by his will; and after retiring he lay

for some time planning and resolving with the explosive energy of the habitually idle man.

VI

THAT night, after Henry had fallen asleep, a giant about twelve feet tall, with soot-covered features and a long beard (he was probably connected with some circus), stopped in front of the Colgate home. The street door, by some mischance, was open. He entered the house, went upstairs, tip-toed along the corridor to Henry's room, entered, then turned and locked the door behind him. His hands were as large as watermelons. With a hideous grin on his sooty face, he raised his clenched fist and drove it with all his might into the pit of Henry's stomach.

Henry awoke, and with a wild scream, leaped to his knees in bed and prepared to give battle for his existence. His blood had turned to grape juice in his veins and cold pellets of moisture stood out all over him like the frost on a glass of ice water. He kept perfectly still, but as nothing else developed he reached out tremblingly, touched the switch and flooded the room with light.

Before putting his feet on the floor, he lay over and looked under the bed. There was nothing there. The screens were in the windows, and investigation showed no one in the bathroom and that his door was locked. He inspected the injured portion of his person, but saw no bruise. Then he remembered the dinner of the evening before.

"That *paté*," he groaned; "I knew I shouldn't take it!" And clutching his diaphragm in bitterness of spirit and in pain of body he threw himself on the bed.

He turned out the light and tossed for hours in darkness before the first pale hue of dawn filled the window squares. Then he fell into a fitful slumber, awakening finally with a splitting headache and with a sense of having something important on his mind.

After a minute or two of thought it came to him.

"Oh, yes," he remembered. "To-day I am to ask her to marry me. We're going to lunch together."

His watch showed eleven-thirty; he was to meet her at half past twelve; he would have to hurry.

"Alexander," he told the man who come in response to his ring, "shave me in a hurry, and get out my clothes while I bathe. I have to be down town in an hour."

VII

AT twelve-twenty he was in his motor and rolling towards the corner where they were to meet. His headache persisted, his mouth was parched and rough, and his main sensation was that of a marsupial carrying a cannon-ball in place of its young. Like a machine without oil, with a faulty carburetor and clogged spark plugs, he was missing fire, flooding his cylinders, producing an excess of carbon, and running with the maximum of friction. Needless to say, he was unable to develop his best speed; his over-speed was gone entirely; and he thought back over the past few days vaguely, with the sense of looking, in something of admiration, and in something of amazement and distrust, at an entirely different person.

If he was one person yesterday, and another to-day, what would he be to-morrow? He experienced a sinking feeling at this uncertainty regarding the one human being in the world he had felt himself sure of, to wit, himself. His first thought was of the bachelor's axiom, that marriage loses its glamour within a year. Then his mind reverted to the more immediate future, and there came up before him the poignant humiliation of having his friends look askance at his wife. Her family he knew would never be even spoken to by his circle, and whether the girl herself would consent to give them up was something that might be doubted. Unbidden, there crept into prominence

in his consciousness the inbred disdains, the instinctive revulsions, the conservatism, the clannishness and the sense of superiority that typifies his kind. He saw massed against him the whole might and moral force of the world's aristocracy. Wherever he might go—to Paris, London, the Riviera, Vienna, Switzerland, New York—everywhere would he be the target of eyes; he would be a bit of gossip to everyone—and a friend to no one on earth.

A heavy sense of depression fell upon him and enveloped his thoughts. But the iron will and the contempt of obstacles that had been his grandfather's weapons in building up the family fortunes had not entirely petered out; he remembered a good-night kiss, and imagined to go with it a childlike innocence and a feminine trustfulness and dependence; so he compressed his lips and continued doggedly towards the place of meeting and the casting of the die.

A tremendous wrench of pain had just come and gone, leaving him weak and gasping, when his car slowed down and he saw her on the appointed corner. She was looking in the opposite direction and he had several minutes to inspect her while the machine was waiting for its chance to go around the traffic policeman and return to where she was standing.

She was more elaborately dressed this morning than she had previously been. Instead of her blue serge, she wore a very short linen suit of an exceedingly vivid red. It was too short, too vivid, and too conspicuous. "Rotten taste," he muttered, with the consciousness that he would have to take her dressing in hand. Then his eyes fell on her shoes. They were high, and of a shiny white, and as she turned for a moment, he saw that they were laced up the back with red laces.

"My God!" he cried.

They rolled up to the curb, and he got out as she came to meet him.

She dropped her eyes and bit her lip in a false shyness. Then she held out her hand and glanced up at him.

"How are you feeling this morning, dearest?" she asked.

With his body vibrating to an excess of vitality that quickened his emotions and colored his imagination (only the day before, in fact), this greeting would have thrilled him, and he would have looked upon her with eyes beclouded by a rose glow of the senses. Now, with his vitality at low ebb, his head aching, his nerves on edge, this bald forcing of the sentimental note jarred upon him like a discord in music.

He did not let himself look at her shoes. But he found himself inspecting her face with a dispassionate scrutiny.

Her skin, undoubtedly, was clear and rather fine. Her lips were red; but her mouth was wide, with a suggestion of coarseness and duplicity as it curved downward at the corners. Her eyes were a pretty violet color, but their expression was hard, and bore out the suggestion of craftiness given by the down-smirking mouth; and her eyebrows, while arched, were too heavy, and dissipated themselves thickly over her nose.

She was still holding his hand. "You look a little sick, sweetheart," she added. "Tell Molly all about it."

Involuntarily, a shudder ran through him and shook him visibly at the thought of what he had almost done.

"Yes," he said; "I am not very well. And I have only a minute, now, to tell you that we can't lunch together. I am going to Palm Beach on the two o'clock train, and I haven't even packed."

He had retreated while he was talking; she had followed; and the sentence was finished across the closed door of the motor.

Turrets fell from air castles, the ground heaved beneath those glorious edifices and tumbled them into a prosaic heap of streets, trolley-cars and office buildings as William, with transcendental tact, let in the clutch.

"Wait," she cried. "You—you *four-flusher!* Do you think you can. . . ."

But even had Henry been inclined to

wait and answer her questions, he would have been unable to give the order. An imperative agony ran through him and twisted his frame, and before he had recovered they were two blocks down the street and gaining headway. Then he took up the speaking-tube, but he did not command a return.

"Home, William, as fast as you can," he directed. "But go by Dr. Angel's first. I've just *got* to get something for this dyspepsia."



THESE THINGS I HAVE ENJOYED

By James Shannon

READING Rabelais the night before a metaphysics examination; an ambiguous rabbit I bought for 25 cents in a wharfinger's restaurant in Baltimore after walking from Washington; watching an Italian laborer when the thermometer registered 95 degrees in the shade; Kulmbacher at Charlie Wirth's in Boston; my first mustache; the smell of fresh cantaloupe; gallons of Pilsener, topped with Welsh rarebit; sleeping with eleven other college youths, the same evening, in a single room at the old Parker House; a smoky sunset over Anaconda Hill; kissing a nineteen-year-old girl behind the door and the ear.



THE PERFECT SONG

By Muna Lee

I WOULD sing with my lips to the lips of a sea-shell,
I would sing to the thrush and the cardinal bird.
I would sing though the singing breezes heard me,
Though the tall field grasses and light rains heard.

For I have a song is fit for the hearing,
And a theme unmatched till the world be done,
Though never a heart on the wide earth heed it
But mine and another one.



WHEN a woman is no longer afraid of every strange man she sees, she is old.



WHEN two play at the game of love one is the dummy.



BE KIND, GRAVEDIGGER!

By Jeannette Derby

I HAVE written directions for the gravedigger. For I must be sure that at last I may be muffled from noises—the earth spatted sound-proof about me—muffled from whirring and rattling and rustle and bang.

For she never sews but there are awful tearing and ripping sounds and the whirr of the machine.

She never sits to read but at a window, where the wind flaps the shade and rattles her paper.

She never shuts a door but she slams it.

She sleeps noisily.

Her laughter is like the crash of a military band.

She scrapes her chair along the floor if she gets up—it creaks if she sits down.

Her feet are tireless—always that quick, nervous tip-tap pit-a-patter.

And my God! how she stirs her tea! Why I gave up sugar—because it crunched.

What hell to live in a cage of constant rattle!

Be generous with the earth, Gravedigger! Give me layer on layer of soundless dirt! Let no crevice be between for seep or sigh! For she—if she must lie above me—she'll have the snuffles—or else tap at her coffin-lid like a woodpecker.

I leave explicit directions for the gravedigger.

THE THREE WISE MEN

THREE wise men traveling through the parched desert, came to a date-palm and paused to rest in its shade.

Said the first wise man: "Woman is like unto the date-palm. To her she draws all men."

And said the second wise man: "Woman is like unto the fruit of the date-palm. Her favor pleases all men's lips."

And the third wise man said: "Woman is like the eating of the fruit of the date-palm. Man soon has his tummy-full of her."

DECISION

By Lenora M. Ervine

SHE had not slept well, and when she woke in the morning, she had a tired feeling of excitement. She was in a strange room, a much larger room than any she had ever previously occupied. It was well furnished, and she noticed particularly how fresh and clean the curtains were. The bed was soft and the sheets were of fine linen, pleasant to feel. She stretched out her arms and legs in lazy joy at the luxury that surrounded her, and as she did so a trimly dressed maid entered the room carrying a breakfast tray. The maid smiled at her with a pleasant, almost intimate smile, and said "Good morning, miss!" It seemed to Isobel that she laid a little stress on "Miss"! Of course! . . .

The maid placed the tray on a small table and then drew up the blind so that the sun poured freely into the room. Isobel lay still and wondered idly what the yellow things on the breakfast tray were. When the tray was placed on the bed she realised that they were telegrams. Of course! . . . To-day was her wedding day! She felt some resentment as she thought that to-morrow she would not be alone; after to-morrow she would never be alone. . . . She sat up in bed and began to eat her breakfast. After all, did it matter so very much that she was not tremendously in love with John? She liked him well enough . . . and all this kindliness and comfort was so attractive. She had lived long enough in the lonely, dreary lodgings. Ugh! She shuddered as she thought of them, and then glanced quickly round the room to reassure herself. This was indeed worth anything. Those awful lodgings, the tiny bedroom too small to be kept tidy, the dusty, draggled curtains, the small can of half-cold water left at her door every morning at seven o'clock, the tasteless breakfast of greasy bacon or boiled shop eggs—how could she weigh those in the balance against this? And had it not been for John, that lodging-house or some other equally dreary place might have been her home for the remainder of her life.

She knew that she was attractive, but then there was no one to attract. The men in the office were impossible—two married and spiritless clerks and the junior—a smart cockney of twenty—and the office-boy. And John. She knew no other men and had no means of meeting them. John had seemed to be outside her life altogether—he was her employer; but she had attracted him and he fell in love with her. That was the miracle. She had been his typist; now, this very day, she was to be his wife.

The future would be so very different from the past. There would be a comfortable home and well-trained servants. She would be able to hire taxi-cabs—how she longed to ride in taxi-cabs!—with less anxiety than she had shown formerly in riding on an omnibus. She would be able to have nice lunches and go to matinées in the middle of the week. She would be able to do her shopping in the morning when the assistants were polite and eager to please. Never again would she be obliged to rush round the cheaper shops between six and seven o'clock, served by tired and irritable assistants, running the risk of buying wrong colors because of the artificial light. She

would now be able to array herself in the clothes and colors which her beauty required for its enhancement, and that was a thing she had never been able to do. How could she? Her salary was thirty-five shillings a week, and when she had paid twenty-one of the precious shillings to her landlady for her bedroom, breakfast, dinner and "full board on Sundays" (what unutterable board!) and had paid for her mid-day meals and her fares and her laundry and odd expenses, there was very little left.

But now! . . .

She lay back on her pillow when she had finished her meal, and began to think of the girls who had learned typewriting and shorthand at the school with her. Most of them had come up from the country and the small provincial towns, full of health and energy and a desire to see the world and to be independent. That was what she had done. They were all eager to be at the centre of things, in the jolly struggle for a living. . . . How short a time it is in which the Bank is the hub of the universe to a woman. There is not one shop near it where women can buy the things they need—and there are so many shops where men can buy their goods. It was stupid, perhaps, to complain, but then she longed for good clothes and fine colors. All the girls did . . . Such jolly girls, too, and how happy they had been together, laughing over the saving they made by lunching off a cup of coffee and a roll and butter! It was bad for them, of course, but . . .

Some of the girls had sent telegrams of congratulation to her. There they lay scattered on the eider-down—such a snug eider-down! She wondered were they jealous of her. Most of them were in offices from half-past nine o'clock until six—sometimes later. Then they went home, very tired, in stuffy tubes and overcrowded 'buses to the dull lodgings and a meagre and ill-cooked dinner; and when that was over and done with they sat about writing letters or mending their clothes or reading a book from Mudie's—and then to bed early so as to be fit for the next day's work. Two of them might go to a matinée on Saturday and on Sunday you could lie in bed a long time if you had no objection to a cold breakfast! . . .

Well, thank heaven, that was all over! No more waiting in the rain and mud for a place in the omnibus! She recollected that she had hesitated when John had asked her to marry him. How could she have been so foolish? She ought to have said "yes" eagerly and have thanked God for the chance. What did it matter if she were not "in love" with John? What was being "in love"? She had never been in that state: she had thought about it and had imagined what it must be like. She had not got that feeling for John, but she liked him. That was something. Perhaps it was a good deal. French girls and Irish girls marry by arrangement, and lots of English girls married for money. They seemed to be happy enough. She had known people who married for love and were thoroughly miserable. Besides, she did love him in a way. He was kind and good, and had treated her so decently from the beginning. She smiled as she thought of the way in which it began.

He had taken her to a restaurant to tea one day on what she now saw was a flimsy excuse—it seemed real enough then—and later he had asked her to dine with him. There was adequate excuse for it. They were working late at the office, and it was essential that they should be properly fed. . . . The clerks had had "dinner money" given to them, but in her case he preferred to order her meal for her. "Women don't know how to take care of themselves," he said.

They talked agreeably over the dinner, and she found herself telling him the short and simple annals of her life, and he told her the short and simple annals of his. She was astonished to learn that his life was as lonely as hers. He was not a rich man, but he was well off, and it seemed to her to be ab-

surd that anyone who was well off should be lonely. . . . Then he gave some stall-tickets for a theatre to her. She laughed when she recollected how long it took her to think of a likely companion for that evening at the theatre, and how disappointed she had been in Janet Howard. . . . He asked her next morning, when she had again thanked him for the tickets, how she had liked the play, and she replied that she had liked it very much.

He hesitated for a few moments and then he said, "Do you like going to the theatre?" and she answered that she loved it. "I don't often go," she said, "because it's horrid to go alone!"

"Yes," he said, "that's my drawback!"

He said later that he had two tickets for another play which he was anxious to see, and he hoped she would allow him to offer one of the tickets to her. If she would accompany him to the theatre (he had a precise way of speaking which pleased her when she became accustomed to it) he would be under an obligation to her. Perhaps she would dine with him before going to the play! . . .

There was a confusion of ideas in her mind. What was the meaning of this offer of friendship from an employer to his typist? An elderly woman in her lodgings had once warned her against men who, she averred, never gave anything to a woman for nothing. "Unless you are prepared to make some return, it is safer to decline presents and hospitality from men!" she said.

He saw that she was hesitating and he said quite quietly, "Let me know in the course of the afternoon whether or not you will be free on that evening. You might take down this letter to.."

She liked the neat way in which he turned from one thing to another. Of course, he did not mean *that!* Other men—but, of course, John was decent through and through! Before she left the room she said she would be very glad to go to the play with him; and after that they often went to theatres and concerts together. It was amusing now to think of his concern lest any of clerks should see them together and talk.

They never left the office together. They met at various places, sometimes under the clock at Charing Cross railway station, sometimes in a tube entrance. There was no suggestion that they were lovers. It did not occur to her that he was in love with her, and she knew that she was not in love with him. They were friends, two people at loose ends who had decided to make companionship. There was nothing in his behaviour to indicate that he was in love with her. He called her "Miss Haring" and she called him "Mr. Lucas" when, that is to say, they called each other anything. They generally avoided names. He had never once taken hold of her arm even in crossing the street. . . .

No doubt people would have said things if they had known of her friendship with him; but then people always did say things, and she did not greatly care what they said. She was much happier now than she had been. This was her only chance of getting pleasure agreeably, and it would be foolish to waste one's desire because of what people might say. She was getting much better food, too, and that was making her brighter. . . .

When they had been friends for six months he suddenly asked her to marry him.

They were sitting in the back row of the stalls at a matinée performance. It was Saturday afternoon and they had had to take stalls because the theatre was almost full. The play was rather silly. . . . "Eleanor," he said in a whisper, "will you marry me?" There was a man on the stage making love in the romantic manner . . . and here by her side was a quiet man making love in the natural manner.

She did not answer, and when the curtain descended at the end of the second act she got up and said, "Let's go out!"

They left the theatre and somehow or other found themselves walking up and down the Embankment. She could see that scene quite plainly. A man was feeding sea-gulls. . . . He told her that he had not made the offer without considerable thought. He had observed her very closely ever since he had first conceived the idea of marrying her. He had been scrupulous not to give her any cause for thinking that he wished to marry her until he was certain that he was not making a mistake. . . .

She felt that he was ticking off her qualities . . . and yet she did not dislike him for it.

She demanded a week for reflection: an agonising, tormenting week, during which she slept little and hated going to the office. He ought to have released her from work for that week, but it did not occur to him to do so. She was jumpy and self-conscious, but he did not appear to be perturbed.

He made no reference to the matter during the week, and she wondered how on earth she should begin to talk about it when the time came. . . . It was he who began the talk. He had waited for the allotted period. He was a business man and he disliked having things hanging over his head. He was used to quick decisions. Had she made up her mind? . . .

She accepted him.

He called her "Eleanor, dear!" and took her hands in his and kissed her, and then he began to dictate letters. . . .

It was all so different from what she had imagined. So, so different! Of course, she liked him — who wouldn't?—but! . . .

The wedding was fixed to take place soon after they became engaged. The wife of one of his friends had overlooked her small trousseau—a gracious, kindly woman who had been very charming to her—and she was to be married from their house. There was to be a small luncheon party of seven or eight people, and then they were going to Paris, where she was to buy nice clothes! . . .

Nice clothes! And John was nice, too. Of course, he was nice. She did like him. It was not what she had imagined, but nothing ever was what one imagined. Yes, her choice was certainly a wise one. She was fond of John and she respected him. If there was anything else in marriage, it would probably come later.

"Anyway, it's too late to change now," she murmured to herself.

There was a knock at the door of her room, and her friend came in, bringing some flowers with her from John. It was time for her to get up. Her bath was ready. Had she all she wanted, and would she ring if she needed anything?

She got out of bed, put on her dressing-gown and fastened up her hair preparatory to going to the bathroom.

"Do you feel nervous?" her friend asked.

"No! Oh, no, not a bit!" she replied.

She looked at herself for a moment in the looking-glass, and then turned away with a little sigh. "It's too late now," she said to herself as she collected her sponge and soap.



MARRIAGE: An admission that love does not live forever.



THE SORROWS OF MR. HARLCOMB

By L. M. Hussey

TO those who knew him with some intimacy the misfortunes of Gwynn Harlcomb were traceable almost in their entirety to his unchecked impetuosities. There are men, it seems, who are always the pawns of chance. Theirs is never the initiative. Others appear on their own part to throw themselves at misfortune, and sometimes no doubt at good fortune, and by their always self-direction to remove chance as a factor in their equation. This seeming difference in the fates of men was in truth pointedly illustrated right in Harlcomb's family with exemplars, Harlcomb and his brother. This brother was drowned at sea—met his death as a passenger on a small liner accidentally rammed. Harlcomb never died at sea, but he once shaved close to it when he attempted a nearly impossible swim in rough water and a strong wind. He was dragged out unconscious. Had he gone a few minutes longer he would, in connection with his brother, have furnished a complete and faultless illustration of the class of men whom chance destroys.

The present little fragment from Harlcomb's career has nothing to do, however, with his complete aquatic history. It deals first with his trouble concerning Miss Kampen — Myra Kampen. She sued him for breach of promise.

Harlcomb was surprised, but more shocked than surprised, when the first letter arrived. Naturally it was not from her, but from a triple-named firm of legal vultures, which was quite worse. How could she go with so intimate a thing and parade it before this trio of affection plunderers? All their little intimacies, shyly wonderful he had thought—had she had to tell everything? No doubt; there was the business of a "case" and these fellows would demand a "case." Luckily, there were no letters that could be read in court with horrible newspaper quotations and tittering eager-mouthed spectators. His disinclination for anything save the most formal correspondence appeared now a fact grown beautifully beneficent. But heaven knows there was enough else for a "case." The extraordinary vulgarity of it! Myra Kampen . . .!

He went at once to see her and waited unduly in her little gaudy reception hall. He thought quite naturally of the other times he had waited there, pleasantly expectant. The room had always from the first impressed him as garish, but there had been the compensation of herself. Now, in fact, he knew it *was* garish, not through accident and apart from her, but as the expression of her. She had no doubt personally ordered the decoration and exclaimed over it when it had been completed. Would not anybody less impetuous have seen startlingly into the soul of a woman who would decorate her drawing-room like a cabaret?

She came in silently through parted curtains and stood in front of them with her hands behind her and a little frown forked between her eyebrows. It was plain that she was not handsome. There was matter for considerable doubt, Harlcomb thought, if a less foolish fellow would care to kiss her.

"You should not have come to me," she said.

"I received a letter," Harlcomb told her. "You know what kind of a letter I received. Something must be done about the thing. I don't believe you understand what it means."

"You should not have come here. You have the address of my solicitors. I suppose I am doing very wrong to receive you . . ."

"You needn't think" (and there was anger in his voice) "that I will have anything to do with that crew. I'm sure you don't realize what all this means. The publicity—everything—"

"I'm sure I realize quite all. I'm not wholly a child, you know . . ."

"Do sit down!" he exclaimed. "Do sit down!"

She hesitated a moment as if to defy these words, uttered in a tone of command, but after all did as he desired.

"We must be really calm," he said, half apologetically, presently.

"And you," she interrupted, "must be really quick in what you want to say to me. I have very little time to give to you this evening."

It was difficult for him in the face of her constant discourtesy to keep his chair. But the impulse to leave her and this odious room was again conquered.

"Even if you say so, I don't believe you realize what it all means. You will have to appear in court. There will be a crowd of people and they will hear and see you and laugh at your most intimate affairs. It is all so horribly vulgar!"

"And how you can change it for me!" She sighed when she uttered this.

He looked at her with quite natural interrogation.

"Must you make me suffer all this?" she asked. "Why are you not honest and why don't you keep your faith? I am still ready. I have given you my consent and have never taken it back. . . . I am still willing to go through with it. . . ."

"How impossible!" he exclaimed. "I explained all that to you. You certainly cannot wish to marry me when I am unwilling. You certainly can't be really willing yourself under the circumstances. And as for this thing—these lawyers—the court—the publicity—"

"These lawyers! The court! The publicity!" She was quite derisive. "I can stand it if you can and even if you can't. But if the idea of the court and the lawyers and the public frightens you so really terribly, why don't you settle? You can settle, you know . . ."

Harlcomb perceived now that his journey had been utterly fatuous. She was not at all in the dark concerning the steps she had taken. Everything had been figured in the most cold-blooded and brutal manner. He told her this in almost the words he thought it.

"I see you have figured it all out. . . . figured it out in cold blood. But you want me to settle! You would rather not go to court, would you?" He took his hat and stick and gloves and turned to her for the last time. "But you shall get nothing. You shall have all your trouble, but you shall get nothing. I will see to that . . ."

It was only, however, the impetuous boast of the moment. He knew, when he walked disheartened off the last worn marble step of her house, that he had not the least chance in preventing a portion of his money going to her basely eager hands. The sum mentioned in the suit was, of course, ridiculous and no jury would ever award it, but for all that she could seize a frightful amount. Indeed, the thing must never get into court, and so, after all, he would have to interview her wretched law-firm. It seemed unfortunate to do this, to aid her this much in doing what she so exactly wanted. Yet he could not spite her without offering himself a greater injury.

He confessed all this, in fact the entire range of his discomfort and chagrin, to his friend Watson, perhaps the only one of his friends whom he had made a consistent confidant. He was always so sympathetic. Perhaps the

entire family had this trait of gracious sympathy, for even Watson's sister murmured to him a few words of her indignation. "That Myra Kampen could *do* such a thing!" she said.

II

This Miss Miriam Watson fitted the need of his moods exactly. He took her the next day, on an invitation that he surprised himself into offering, to an unobtrusive little Italian restaurant, because she liked Italian things. It was considerate of her, too, in his impending pecuniary stringency, to pick out a place with an eighty-five-cent table d'hôte, including a pint of red wine. She insisted on the table d'hôte, and showed him how to conquer macaroni by twirling the fork in the dish after the manner of the Italians.

"And all our intimacies," he said to her, looking with admiration at the brown-blackness of her straight hair, . . . "it was at first impossible for me to believe that she could do such a thing . . ."

"It was dreadfully *common* . . ."

"Yes, to think of lawyers and courts knowing about our quite personal affairs!"

"Common and even . . . even vulgar," she said.

"Is this the way you twiddle your fork? . . . Yes, and she was barefaced enough to have the whole thing planned out to the last contingency. She literally told me I could settle."

"And what else *can* you do with such a creature?"

Her face showed plainly her sympathy in the lines of its delicate refinement. He was not quite sure but that he stressed the unpleasant predicament too much while with her. Her sensibilities were so patently acute and this crude subject could very readily occasion her a hidden discomfort.

"Do I tell you too much of my trouble?" he asked her. "I am really afraid the affair is much too coarse to worry you with."

"No," she hastened to tell him. "I want to help you if I can."

It was delightfully considerate in her. Miriam resembled her brother—it was always this sort of delicate consideration he could expect from Watson. But Watson was only a man and she was a woman with all the natural added intuitive subtlety. He had known her, too, as long as he had known Watson, but curiously had never done much more than greet her. It was quite a shame that in all these years they had not dined together this way many times before. Not that he could reconcile himself very readily to the red wine, but then it did not follow that they would always have to eat in an Italian place . . .

The day that Myra Kampen's lawyers came to a final agreement with him over a sum for settlement he went to tell the whole thing to Miriam. She led him into Harry's little smoking den because she said she knew he always *did* go there when he came to call on them and she liked to see him comfortable and smoking anyway . . .

He really believed this to be a charming sacrifice on her part, for she never smoked herself and it was not conceivable that she should like the odor of tobacco. It was indeed a little problem with him whether he should smoke—it seemed so inconsiderate when she couldn't be supposed to enjoy it—but he concluded that perhaps she would deem him unappreciative after troubling to bring him particularly to the smoking-room and even getting for him Watson's cigars and cigarettes.

"So she did really make you pay her money?"

"Yes, I saw her three Shylocks today."

She sighed with delicate sympathy.

"And yet, what else was there for you to do? You couldn't let the thing actually happen—courtroom crowded with strangers—it would have been horrible."

"Yes, I am well enough off, I suppose."

"I wish I could have helped you more . . ."

He gently let a smoke cloud drift across his face and looked at her through it. She was regarding him solicitously. He mused on the moment how much more sharply Myra Kampen's vulgar proceedings had moved her than they had moved him. It was as he formerly thought it, too coarse an elbow-rubbing with common stuff for her exquisite sensibilities.

"We must not talk about it any more," he said. "You can't realize how much you have helped me. . . . Tell me, are you still decided to go to Italy in the fall?"

"I think so. They can teach me more there than I can learn anywhere."

"I think you sing wonderfully now," said Harlcomb. "I know when you come back from Milan you will be a really great singer. . . . The question is, what am I to do?"

"You will miss me?"

"Do you think the question is necessary?"

He discovered himself beautifully soothed and his mind rested delightfully. Conversation with her was always so easy and natural. There was no necessity to strain after anything, and even the little smart tricks and the witticisms he told to other women were quite unrequired. He looked restfully at her and she sat in silent dreaminess following his last remark.

"I should not be frank with you," she said finally, "if I didn't confess that I will miss you, too."

"Too bad I'm not a vocalist myself."

"It *would* be lovely if you could come along."

He had his moment of amazing inspiration.

"I can," he said. "Will you marry me?"

He remembered afterwards her particular words. She had betrayed not the least surprise and had spoken in answer in a very few moments, quietly and with her voice almost conversational.

"Yes," she had said, "I will marry you. . . ."

Afterward, too, when he confided the whole thing to Margherita, his Italian teacher, he commented particularly on the startling matter-of-factness with which the thing had been said and done. Harlcomb told Margherita that he doubted such another proposal, precisely similar, ever actually had happened.

"It was just a piece of conversation," he told her. "Like saying 'good afternoon,' or 'good-bye.' I thought of it and asked her and she said 'yes.' We didn't even think to kiss each other."

He found it, in fact, quite natural to talk to Margherita about Miriam, which was simply because she knew Miriam so well and had prepared her for Italy just as she was preparing him. And yet her manner was not reposeful nor would one conceive her inviting confidences. She had a quick, restless vivacity and could not keep long in one chair. Harlcomb could not entirely decide what made him talk to her unless it was her very acute and interesting manner of listening.

"The two of you were certainly not romantic lovers," she said.

"You don't in particular admire our way, do you?" he asked her.

She shrugged her shoulders with a very Italian shrug.

"We must get to our little work," she said. "You will tell me now the use of the subjunctive after *che*."

It was precisely as she thought. The proposal had been unromantically matter-of-fact. About such occasions one has certain ideas. The notion of the right thing to do, the thing that ought to have happened, did not at all coincide with the almost business arrangement that he and Miriam had made. His mind caught odiously on the unpleasant words. Anyone might have thought it a business arrangement. Of course, it was difficult to assign any blame. He had proposed the thing without a pretense of introduction and very suddenly. Still, was it not natural that Miriam should have shown at least a trace more sentiment? All tradition had it that such moments ought to be sentimental. With a prospective wife in question, it was not pleasant to

think that she lacked in her character something vital. But of Miriam it might with just grounds be suspected this unpleasant lack of a very desirable fervor. She took the prospect so very drily. . . . Did her character indeed want this something, this verve . . . desire . . . whatever you might pin it down to in words?

Harlcomb got to the point where he put the problem to Margherita. "One woman should understand another woman better than I can," he said to her apologetically. She would not, however, discuss his perplexity with any satisfaction. Her replies might be anything, expressed as they were in the meaningful but not quite articulate shoulder-shrug. . . .

"I understand your feeling," he said to her. "You will only discuss this to a certain point because you are loyal to your friend."

"I am so fond of Miriam," she said.

But Miriam seemed almost to drive him to Margherita. He could scarcely get to see her . . . Her preparations for the Italian journey were impossibly endless. To call upon her with the hope of some little intimate chat had become a lottery in which to lose was almost a fixed certainty. And when he found her she would chide him.

"You should be studying your language," she would tell him. "Why have you not an appointment with Margherita to-day?"

When he made his final and deeply important admission to Margherita she received it with a most intense silence.

"It is really a mistake," he assured her. "We both of us are making a mistake. I am sure neither Miriam nor I suit each other."

He could not throw away his life nor hers. He wrote her a note, phrased very carefully, for he understood her sensibilities and for all the world would not hurt her pride. "It is, of course, for your sake," he told her. "I know now that I did a wrong thing to ask you. Your nature is too delicate for my coarseness. You would never be anything but unhappy. . . ."

He recounted to Margherita the words of his note as nearly as he could remember them. She appeared nervous and impatient as he talked and shifted constantly her position in her chair.

"There are others," said Harlcomb dreamily, "with whom such a contingency would never have occurred. Imagine me sending such a letter to *you*, for instance . . ."

He never could remember her speech being quite so intense.

"Do you mean," she said, "that you want to marry *me?*"

It was a blindingly lovely and original idea. Clearly this was what he *did* want, although he had been too stupid in introspection to come at it. But she should never know. . . . He grasped her roughly and kissed her.

"You shall marry me!" he exclaimed.

She leaned her head on his shoulder and put her arms about him and breathed an expressive "ah!" Harlcomb was afraid it was almost *too* sentimental, but then it is so difficult to make the turns of life exactly suit the preconceived idea.

"You will not give up the Italian journey?" she asked, searching him with her jetty eyes. "We shall go together now, shall we not?"

III

He promised her this. They were married and made all preparations for departure. He could speak the language quite well enough and Margherita was proud of his accent. And then the mails brought them a terrible surprise—early in the morning at breakfast. He read, and indeed may have paled a little.

"We can go nowhere!" he cried. "We shall have money for nothing! And from *her!*"

He seized his head between his hands and Margherita reached passionately for the letter.

It was the notice of Miriam's suit for breach of promise.

THE ENDING

By Larry O'Rourke

HE did not care for the type. She was petty, vain, selfish, and filled with the querulous arrogance of a very pretty woman. But as a writer he felt that it was his duty to study the woman and to resolve her into her constituent elements, for she was of a type at once rare and common. He knew, the first day of their acquaintance, that she was the character he was seeking around which to drape his Fall novel. So all that summer he studied her. He probed the depth of her childish vanity, analyzed her egotism, the egotism of the pretty woman that takes everything and gives nothing, and with the scalpel of his intellect he laid bare the astonishing vacuity of her mind. He discovered that she was mean and spiteful, foolish and conceited, and that these qualities were enclosed in the banal personality of a small town belle. The novel rapidly took shape in his mind and he pushed on in his explorations with increased ardor.

He had nearly completed his analysis when he fell in love with her.



THE FOOL

By John McClure

ALL about him they are erecting tremendous dams, gigantic buildings and bridges, scooping canals. He hears the wheezing of their derricks, the rattle of their hammers. They scurry all about, busy as ants.

And he sits foolishly among them like a child of five years, doing nothing in the world. He plays with words as a child with blocks, as a kitten with spools of thread. He is very silly. He puffs an old pipe as a child would blow upon a tin whistle. Is he not a piteous fool? . . . Piteous.

They deafen him with their hammers. They drive trucks over him. They are very annoying. But he is a fool and happy. He plays with words as a child with pebbles and marbles and paper-dolls. He sucks his thumb. He is very silly. He chases phrases as if they were butterflies. They laugh at him.

And yet he would not trade his silly songs for the palace of Pharaoh, nor one graceful butterfly he has caught for the Panama Canal.



DO YOU DRINK?

By Kingsley Moses

AT least once a month, and every month, and every year, the publishers of the ten leading New York newspapers remark to their respective managing editors: "Boost circulation." Nine of the editors, proceeding along as many separate ways, hasten to: (1) Print more news, (2) Improve the editorial page, (3) Strengthen the sporting columns, (4) Play up Society, (5) Buy three more comic strips, (6) Apply the yellow paint-brush, (7) Print on pink and green paper, (8) Publish nothing but war news, (9) Publish no war news. And all of them fail where the tenth succeeds; for the canny tenth simply trots down to the advertising manager and says: "Get more 'Help Wanted' ads."

* * *

All of which, while true, has precious little to do with the story unless it be to add a tint of probability to a tale apparently preposterous.

* * *

It had been a lean winter in New York, and nothing had waxed fat save the circulation of the tenth managing editor's paper. When, therefore, a certain advertisement appeared in the aforesaid paper it is not strange that there was a rush of applicants. The advertisement read:

> Wanted: A young man of good address, preferably a college graduate, to travel for a first-class business house. Salary $100 a week, commissions and a liberal expense account. Call personally. Mr. Hemingway, Knickerbocker Hotel.

This advertisement, set narrow measure, eight-point type, triple leaded, was first run on a Monday morning. Before eight-thirty, forty-two young men were waiting in the lobby to see Mr. Hemingway, and more were coming fast. At precisely nine o'clock Mr. Hemingway looked up from the breakfast table in his room to welcome the first applicant. A tall, clerical-looking man was Mr. Hemingway, with cadaverous features, and a high, jutting forehead.

"Good morning," quoth Mr. Hemingway to the first applicant, a young fellow with all the well-known marks of a "hustler"; "let's get to business: your name?"

"Ralph Hargate."

"College?"

"Columbia."

"Age?"

"Twenty-eight."

"Occupation."

"Bank clerk."

Mr. Hemingway knit his brows for a moment, then suddenly shooting a finger toward the young applicant he snapped: "Do you drink?"

The young man looked shocked: "I should say not, sir. I am married."

"Very good," Mr. Hemingway nodded benignly. "Fill out this blank, Mr. Hargate, and tell me where I can reach you by telephone."

Then turning to the door he shouted: "Next."

William R. James, Princeton, thirty-two, soap salesman, is a synopsis of the next applicant. And again Mr. Hemingway fired his abrupt question concerning liquid inclination.

"Booze and big business do not mix," was the reply.

William R. James also filled out his blank and departed.

As in *Who's Who,* the next four may be classified:

(1) P. R. Boggs, Harvard, thirty, lawyer, "liquor is a narcotic poison."

(2) Leonard Smith, Wesleyan, twenty-five, reporter, "alcohol kills two thousand people daily."

(3) Carl Rigby, International Correspondence School, twenty-seven, floorwalker, "whiskey reduces a man's efficiency."

(4) Theophilus Q. Walsingham, St. Stephen's, twenty-six, Y. M. C. A. secretary, "drink is the curse of the nation."

Seventy-four times the Demon Rum had taken the count when late that afternoon there strolled into the apartments of Mr. Hemingway a long, gaunt youth answering to the name of Peter Jones.

Having helped himself to a comfortable chair, and extended a chased silver cigarette case to his host, Mr. Jones fired up and amused himself by attempting to hang smoke rings on the chandelier.

Patiently Mr. Hemingway began his cross-examination, and patiently propounded his moral query.

"Well," drawled Mr. Jones, "yes, I do drink considerable."

It was then that Mr. Hemingway fainted.

* * *

"That was how I got this job," Peter Jones explained to me that night as we sat in the club-car of the Broadway Limited and watched the furnace flares of Pittsburgh. "Hemingway is American representative of James Johnson's Irish Whiskey and was looking for an honest man."

EVOCATION

By John Myers O'Hara

THE evening lamp,
The shades pulled low, the world
Shut out with night;

The reading time,
The cherished books, the one
Loved presence near;

Benefic hour,
So like her soul, of joy
Serene and deep.

I dreamed no day
Could ever come, O death,
When she could go;

How clearly now
I bring her back, the light
Upon her face;

And see her sit,
A gentle ghost, beside
The unlit lamp.

ELSE

By Louis Wilkinson

SOMEBODY was in her boudoir. Olive Kreymer, standing outside, heard the movement of a chair over the rug, then she heard a sigh, then a whisper—more than one person!

"Oh, Max! Max!"

Olive reflected that this was, as the expressive phrase went, "really not quite nice." It was her room, Max was her husband's name, the voice invoking it was female and showed emotional stress. These were all unquestionable facts. She waited, listening for more. . . . A subdued squeak reached her attentive ear . . . a squeak . . . caused, she conjectured, either by the pressure, against the parquet margin of the floor, of one of the rollers of the divan, or by an indiscreetly administered embrace. Which was it? She wished she knew. Neither of the two alternatives seemed quite nice.

"Oh, else—else—!"

"Else—what?" This was cryptic. "Else!" What was it that would happen if the other thing did not? "Else!" The exclamation crowded Olive's brain with fluttering uncertainties: they hovered and impinged, all these potentialities of happenings dependent on the non-fulfilment of that other— "Oh, else—else"—I will kill myself! Could that be it? Her husband's voice displayed considerable agitation, so much agitation that Olive hardly at first recognized it as his: the tone and quality seemed almost unfamiliar. What would he do, "else"? She was consumed by curiosity, but only for a moment. Of course, she speedily concluded, he would do nothing at all. He always paid his tailors' bills out of his winnings at poker . . . ah!

"Max!" the female voice trembled again—"Oh, Max—don't!"

Olive stirred with indignation. How dared she? This inhibition for her husband—for that regal creature! The wife forgot all about its being not quite nice, she remembered how she had always yielded to her Max in everything—given him all he wanted—her money, her houses; yes, whether personal or real estate, that made no matter; her box at the opera—a veritable heirloom, this, in the van Hoovermoonen family, but now it stood in his name—even her special monogrammed notepaper, perfumed and giltedged almost imperceptibly, with what delicacy of taste! All—all was his. Her jewellery, too. . . . Yes, once he had expressed admiration for a turquoise ring, a favourite of hers, a gift to her in childhood from no less a personage than the famous optimist poet, Mr. Howard Erechtheus Plopp, of Kansas City, Mo., author of "Chirps o' Daily Cheer" and "Smile On, Smile Ever!" Olive's father would often lend Mr. Plopp a hundred dollars or so to enable him to sustain his view of life as a wonderful thing of roseate hue. . . .

So he had given her, ever so optimistically, that turquoise when she was a little child, given it with an inscription, too,—something about the turquoise eyes of innocence—and yet she had passed that ring over to her husband without a murmur, she had had it transformed to a decoration for his cravat. . . . "The turquoise eyes of innocence!" And his were dark eyes, not really innocent at all. Ah, but he was a Lord of Life! No doubt of that. He was predestined to have what he

wanted; if he didn't have it, he simply took it—she might as well give it to him,—yes—and then this quavering little silly chit dared to say "Don't!" In her boudoir, too! And he a Lord of Life!

As Olive Kreymer mused, with her hand on the doorknob, there was a strange silence in the room. But Olive did not mind that, she was not bored. An ideal heroine, she was capable of entraining for reminiscences of her past life at any moment, and of continuing the journey for hours. It did not matter whether she was sitting or lying or walking or running or dancing, or standing up, as now, slightly inclined with her hand on a doorknob. Her mind was wonderfully detached. She almost forgot to listen; she scarcely realized the strange silence, hardly noticed when, hoarsely and suddenly, those charged words, "Will you—my darling?" burst from the lips of the unseen. "Will you—else—"

Ah! She listened attentively, for here again was the enigma; once more it hung in veiled air. "Else *what?*" Olive's brow contracted, she bit her lips, she opened her eyes wide, she crinkled and crumpled her little toes in her little shoes; she evinced, in fact, every appropriate symptom of baffled bewilderment.

A silence—then again that subdued squeak. No, it was not caused by pressure against the parquet margin of the floor by one of the rollers of the divan, Olive felt sure of that this time. That divan! It was a gift of hers to him on the anniversary of his Confirmation Day—they both were liable to religious moments—how well she remembered! After all, that made it rather less "not quite nice," the pair of them being in her boudoir. It was his divan, after all.

With a curious automatic movement Olive bent down to the keyhole of the door. The divan was directly in her view, and sitting there was a blonde girl, with a flushed face and wet eyes. She was turning aside, she hid one cheek with her hand. Max was not in sight.

A rapid revolution of thoughts took place in Olive's mind. Only once before had her husband's affections shown a tendency to wander—three years ago. Olive, with great adroitness and tact, had intercepted a letter. . . . Ah! she recalled that shooting pain, a sort of cardiac neuralgia, it was, she remembered . . . ah! She had asked advice of her old and trusted friend and confidante, Mrs. MacIntyre.

"Take the girl up, my dear," the shrewd old Scotch-Irish-American had advised. "Make friends with her. You'll see, that will do the trick."

"Oh, yes!" Olive had eagerly clasped her hands together, "I'll be *good* to her!"

"That's it," the older woman had replied. "Be a saint about it all. That's the rôle; that'll cook her goose for her."

It had. There was a terrific row within a week, the affair went to pieces, the girl, furious, returned all of Max's presents and all of Olive's. . . . Olive had given her a beautiful peignoir; she had not had time to put it on, even. Olive had that peignoir still, carefully put away. . . . She often went into the wardrobe and gave it an emotional glance. . . . An idea struck her! Why not? Detaching her gaze from the keyhole, swiftly, noiselessly, she glided away in the direction of her dressing-room.

In a couple of minutes she was back at her boudoir door, the garment in her hands. She held it up to herself, gauging the measurements. Would it fit? She looked through the keyhole . . . the girl was rather tall . . . Olive turned away, gave another look to the peignoir, held it at arm's length, frowned at it, imprinted its dimensions clearly, positively, on her mind, then again she stooped at the door. No good. The girl was tall—much too tall. How annoying! Max had always liked petites. This girl was an extra-size! Raising her magnificent head from the aperture, Olive cast a glance of acute disappointment at the peignoir. Curious, this change of taste—curious

and inconvenient. Well—Olive sighed deeply—she would have to go and buy another peignoir—an extra-size. She sighed again.

The voice of Max, still strangely blurred, almost disfigured by emotion, came apparently from a corner of the room. "I am so happy—else—!"

Olive took a deep breath. He was saved then! He would not kill himself now. Probably in any case, not—still, it was a relief to have that quite settled. She went downstairs, commanded her limousine, and issued forth to buy the peignoir.

II

When she came back, she went straight into the morning-room. Her husband was there, recumbent in a large leather armchair. Through the open door Olive had caught sight of one of those massive masculine knees of his raised high in air, betokening an attitude of ease. She advanced, carrying the parcel containing the peignoir. The Lord of Life had just finished his afternoon tea: his strong right hand, with a cigarette between the maroon-stained fingers, drooped, with a fine reserve of force, over an arm of the chair; his eyes were closed, he seemed to be asleep.

She stood before him. "Max!" she called gently. Her eyelids trembled, but he gave no answering stir. She tapped her little foot: still he was motionless. She tapped again, then, with a sudden gesture of impatience, she tapped the toe of her shoe somewhat sharply, but with all her accustomed grace of movement, against his shin.

"Demmit!" He grunted, shifted his posture, half opened his eyes. "Demmit! Don't do that!" He rubbed his shin, and swore again, softly, in a high-toned manner.

"Max!" Her eyes were fixed reproachfully upon him.

"Well — what's up?" Successfully, from long practice, he evaded her glance. "What have I been doing now?"

"Oh, Max!" She lingered on every syllable of his name. "You know."

She diverted her eyes to the ceiling. She was very saintlike as she stood there, so forbearing, so well prepared for confession and contrition, so ready to forgive, so entirely with the right on her side. Max felt uncomfortable.

"What do I know?" he muttered sulkily.

"You know," she repeated, and then by a happy inspiration added: "I know." There was silence, but not for long. "I know. You know." Then, warming to it, she went on, "*She* knows. We know. You know—"

She stopped. How effective that was!

"Haven't the remotest idea what you're talking about. Have a cigarette?" Max was now not so much uneasy as bored.

"Oh, Max!" She shrank away, deeply hurt by his mal àpropos reply. "How can you? I know all." She was tremendously impressive.

He looked at her in well-bred surprise. "Well—I—haven't the remotest idea—word of honour—?"

"But I forgive you!" She broke quickly in on him. "I forgive you—and her. I am ready to be friends—with you *both*." A smothered groan came from the depths of the chair. "Yes, I have even brought her a little gift—I—"

"Oh, hell!" A fine shade of annoyance clouded Max Kreymer's vigorous features: the masculinity of his brow was ruffled by his reminiscence. "Olive!" he stammered, "please don't. I don't exactly know whom you're referring to, but please don't. Fact is"—seeing that she was about to speak again, he went hurriedly on—"fact is, I've trouble enough already. That scoundrel Alphonse is going to be married." He swung sharply 'round in his chair and detected the edge of a black coat-tail on the floor outside the half-opened door. "Ah, there he is!" he exclaimed. "Alphonse! Get up and come in!"

The valet obeyed: his knees were

dusty, but he presented himself with all the aplomb of the Gallic race.

"Well?" His master addressed him. "Have you thought it over, Alphonse? Very wrong of you, you must see that—this marriage idea—great nuisance for me—awful distraction for your mind—you must see that—most inconvenient all round. Mrs. Kreymer quite agrees with me—hopes you'll think better of it. We don't like it at all. It is unnecessary." Max had always been a strong individualist.

"Are you sure, Alphonse, that you're acting wisely—prudently?" Olive questioned him with the brilliant originality for which she was famous.

"Oh! Madame!" The little man jumped in the air excitedly and waved his arms. He had studied the deportment of foreign valets from the modern American stage. "Oh! But, Madam! Beg pardon, I mean *'Mais,* Madame!' If you could see her! I am not vot you call ze marrying man, but —*que voulez-vous chère madame?* Ah, but she is *ravissante!* She look like a lily! Oh, but she is beau-ti-ful!—*Comme elle est belle!*" he added.

There was a pained silence. Max, naturally enough in the circumstances, tugged at his moustache. Olive, of course, stood poised, with a regard, regretful yet dignified, fixed on the valet.

"Eef you could see her, madame—ah, zen you would forgeeve me! An' she is not only beautiful, she is clever —vare clevairre! She is an arteest! She work at Madame Mignonne's, on Feefth Avenue—on ze Avenue Five. Ze most expenseev of all ze *costumières!* Madame go zere herself. My lily was here zees afternoon from ze magasin, she bring some beautiful leetle boxes for Madame. It was zen I take my opportunity. Pardon, madame! Pardon ze libairty—but when ze heart lofes! And I win her! I win my beautiful Else!"

"Else!" A lurid light began to break in on Olive's consciousness. "Else!"

"Her name is Else. Else Beaumerstein! My angel! Ah, she is so fine, so large, so white, so tall—like a lily—so *tall!*"

"Enough!" Olive winced with pain. "Enough!" she cried through her compressed lips.

"Ah! If you could see her! *Si vous—*" The valet lifted one leg off the ground, and kissed the tips of his fingers. He was proud of this achievement. At such moments he felt like the man in the advertisement of Ed. Pinaud's Hair Restorative—so light, so gay, so French, so debonair.

Olive did not feel light or debonair. On the contrary, she pressed her hand to her brow.

"But"—she gasped—"your name is Alphonse!"

The man started and looked guilty. "Oh, yes, madame," he stammered, *"mais oui."*

"Why, then, did she call you 'Max'?"

"Ah!" he recovered himself and smiled ingratiatingly. "Her leetle whim! Ze ladies—*que voulez-vous?"*

"Outrageous!" interrupted Olive's husband in angry tones. "You don't mean to tell me you allow yourself to be called by my name! This is not right! It is grossly improper!"

"Ah, monsieur!" The valet opened out the palms of both hands, and then swept them in a semicircle around his feet, shrugging his shoulders at the same time. "Monsieur! What would you? Eet is my name also."

"What!" roared his employer. "What! Deceitful scoundrel!" He seized a priceless Chinese vase from the lacquered table at his elbow and with one turn of his wrist shattered it (the vase) to fragments on the floor. He was strongly moved, moved to the very depths of his turbulent, masterful nature.

"Monsieur!" The man spoke after the clash had subsided. His eyes were frightened. "Monsieur, I am vare sorry. I am indeed Max, but I did not think it correct—*comme il faut*—that I should be called by the same name as my *patron*—in his house—*chez lui.* So

I call myself Alphonse. Of course, my girl, she call me Max."

"I don't believe you're a Frenchman at all!" His employer's suspicions darkened.

"No!" cried Olive. "You spoke with no trace of a French accent—no trace whatever!"

"Ah, no! Monsieur—Madame—forgeeve me. I'm a Choiman—*je suis allemand!*"

"Disgraceful!" Max Kreymer was calmer now: he controlled his wrath. "Disgraceful! And with the war on, too. I would dismiss you at once, but I have to be dressed for dinner, haven't I?" He drew himself erect to the full height and strength of his manly form. A Lord of Life! A Lord of Men! "Most inconsiderate of you, Alph—er—Ma—you scoundrel! However!" He turned and began to pace his way from the room, the servant following him humbly.

Olive, in bitter disappointment, watched their retreating figures. Then the tears started to her turquoise eyes: she remembered the peignoir.

"An extra-size," she murmured. "No one else can wear it."

"Alphonse!" she called.

The man pivoted around with his accustomed deference. "Madame!"

"A wedding present for—for—" She indicated the parcel that lay there helplessly on the floor amid the ruins of the Chinese vase. "A wedding present for—for—" She could not bring herself to utter that name.

"Ah, yes, Madame! *Mais oui! Mille mercis!* For—Else! My Else!" He pressed his hand to his heart as he picked the parcel up. *"Mille mercis!"* He bowed low to his mistress. "Ah, madame!" He gave a romantic gaze to the far distance, with wide eyes, filled with dreams to the very brim.

"Else!" he murmured ecstatically. *"My* Else!"

MY SYMPHONY NEIGHBOR

By Edna Wahlert McCourt

HE comes early, every Friday afternoon.

He folds his overcoat elaborately with his knotted hands—his knuckles are like dead men's—and then settles in his seat with puffs and sighs of relief: that exertion is over. He puts another pair of spectacles over his watery eyes, and the program flutters in his flustered fingers.

He volunteers a few remarks to me in a voice that makes me think of a record from a cracked victrola disc. He says this was played in Seventy-two, or he heard So-and-So sing that; this number is pure music, that just noise. And so on. . . .

When the concert is well on its way, my neighbor falls asleep.

Sometimes he sleeps until the end, sometimes he takes a hundred little naps. But always, at the close, he says to me (I wake him gently with my elbow, though he never knows it):

"A splendid concert! Music makes me young again."

RENSHAW'S GRIEF

By P. F. Hervey

RENSHAW never smiled. He went through life with a simple dignity, a gravity that was never disrupted. Sometimes he would avert his head for a moment and emit a short, choking sound which his friends were at liberty to consider a laugh.

Renshaw was fond of musical comedies, and subscribed to three funny papers, including *The Independent*. He always listened politely to jokes, and at the end of one he would remark solemnly: "That is excellent," or, "I think that really good." . . . But he never smiled.

As dignity is regarded as a sign of profundity and grief wins more respect than cheerful fortitude, Renshaw found his path in life smooth and facile. A girl who had wealth and beauty idealized his eternal sadness and insisted on marrying him. . . . But Renshaw never smiled.

Renshaw was secretly in terror of seeming effeminate, and to prevent this he adopted a determined manner and patronized the sporting-page. He often threatened, and because he did so in a morose manner people believed him and were afraid. . . . But he never smiled.

Renshaw's best friend was a huge joke who was aware of that fact. He was forever tumbling into some absurd predicament and then pointing it out with a scream of hilarity to his acquaintances. . . . But Renshaw never smiled. Sometimes Renshaw's lips trembled, and faint lines creased his mouth and instantly vanished: it almost seemed as if he were controlling his mirth by an effort. . . . But he never smiled.

As Renshaw grew older his dignity won him a place at the head of a great corporation. He had merely to look important, to keep silent, and to be grave if he wished to retain his position. Renshaw retained it.

In due course of time he was mentioned as a prominent man; and he was forced to employ an extra secretary to write his interviews on questions of the day. . . . But he never smiled. At length when he was nearly sixty a tradition grew up about him. It was said that his heart had been broken by a coquette and that he had never recovered. Ever since he had thrown himself into work with a grim, relentless energy. . . . But Renshaw never smiled.

And the real truth was that Renshaw had a strong sense of humour, but a stronger command over his facial muscles. Renshaw never smiled, because he was afraid that he would not look sufficiently virile: *Renshaw had dimples!*



THE trouble with being virtuous is that you can't tell about it afterwards.



THE DEMOCRAT

By Douglas Turney

FROM the very beginning, Henry Jenkins was determined that his sudden acquisition of money should not spoil his democracy. He knew he had become an important man, but he vowed to himself that no one else should know he knew it.

To reassure himself that money was not making him act like a superior being, and to reassure on the same point the men who had been his companions in the days when he was still hoping to get rich, he would say:

"I'll be darned if I'll get stuck up over my money like some of the people do! A man ought to remember his poor days. He ought to know that money doesn't make him any better than any one else—it just makes things easier for him. I don't care who the man is, if I've known him when I was poor I'll still be his friend now that I'm rich. What do you say, boys, to having a little drink all 'round on me?"

The boys all said "yes" or "yep" or grunted or nodded their heads or made their way hastily toward the bar—for a drink was a drink, no matter who bought it or what they thought of the buyer—so Henry was convinced that his democracy was as apparent to the crowd as his treat was acceptable.

And when they had downed one drink, Henry bought them another, just to give double proof that he was democratic and that money hadn't spoiled him or his friendship for them, although he had been "rich" for some half a year. Then, with hasty promises to see them all again soon and with his favorite farewell—"Don't take any wooden money"—he left.

"Henry ain't got much time for his old pals now he's got all that coin," remarked one, tentatively.

"That's right," agreed another. "Of course, he's a good guy and all that to buy twice, but if he hadn't got rich he'd still be hanging around with us, instead of rushing away so quick."

II

HENRY JENKINS went on his democratic way, telling everybody how democratic he was and intended to be. He thought he was doing the manly, the American thing in openly decrying the possibility that money could improve human beings and he felt quite warm-hearted when he condescended to speak to the janitor. He had a somewhat foggy fragment of an idea that he, alone and single-minded, might upset the fairly firmly established belief in classes in the United States, as elsewhere, and set the example for the "big" men of the nation to prove they still were of the masses by passing an hour now and then with the boys in the corner saloon and by calling the waitresses by their first names as in the days of their poverty. And he was tremendously proud of himself.

One of his favorite ways of enjoying himself was in telling the janitor that money had nothing at all to do with the character of a real man.

"Look at me," he said, in one of these frequent dissertations. "Look at me. I'm a man of affairs"—he had just acquired that phrase and he liked it—"but you see I'm just as ready to speak to you as to any of the rich men I know. I think all men are created free and equal, just as our forefathers

thought. I think you're just as good as I am. No matter how important I may become to the world, I shall always recognize you in the street and always be willing to speak to you."

The janitor, who had a sense of values and who felt truthful at that particular time and who knew, also, that money does improve human beings, if they are susceptible to improvement, replied:

"I guess you don't amount to so much and ain't goin' to, or you wouldn't be talking to *me* at all."



ON A PARK BENCH

By William Sanford

THEY sat on a park bench in the light of the silvery moon. His muscular right arm was about her tiny waist. . . . Her little face looked expectantly up into his. Slowly he bent his head until his lips touched hers. Not once did he kiss her, but many, many times. . . . She gave a soft little sigh of content, as he drew her closer.

"Little girl," he murmured, "You're awfully sweet, and I love you. What's your name?"



RESIGNATION

By Jean Starr Untermeyer

NOW hear me.
I will cast aside my longing for romantic roles,
And accept my destiny with a wry pride.
I will be a consoling breast;
Lips of comfort and counsel;
A retreat from storms and temptations;
And the officer-in-chief of the domestic garrison.
I, who was wont to think of myself
As an arch rebel;
The very symbol of Romance;
Or a singing flame that lit up the corners of our world.
But I will take a sly comfort in my lot,
And my share of glory, too;
In the praises of your songs,
All the wages of your love!



I. O. U.

By Thyra Samter Winslow

EFFIE DALE had been in the chorus for four years.

In the beginning, when she was eighteen, she had left a position as telephone girl for a place in a vaudeville act. She got it through another telephone girl whose brother was on the stage. The vaudeville act was billed as "A Complete Miniature Musical Comedy," and had a cast of three principals and four chorus girls. Effie, whose name until that time had been Mary Jensen, was one of the chorus girls. After a year of split-weeks on a small Western circuit Effie came to New York. She learned a lot during the first winter. She learned how to make up. She learned stage slang, "three-sheeting" and "up-stage" and things like that. She sneered at amateurs. She felt that she knew a great deal about life. But Effie was a good girl.

After waiting around New York for a month or so, spending the money she had saved on the road, she got a position in the chorus of "Earnest Abe in Frisco," a second-rate musical comedy. She stayed with the show almost a year. She learned more about life. She met Johns, and found in the towns she played, unknown towns such as Morganville and Humphreys and El Dorado, that they were embarrassed country youths who could be persuaded to buy meals and then could be left suddenly after the meal was over. It was a pretty hard year, for the jumps were long and the hotels poor.

When Effie got back to New York again she determined to get with a big show, the kind that played Louisville and St. Louis and Kansas City. She bought new clothes, pretty gaudy ones, and frizzed her hair around her ears. She knew that anyone, after just one glance, would know that she was a professional. She got a job in Hamilton, Ohio, for ten weeks in summer stock and had a pretty good time, living right across from the amusement park and meeting a lot of small-town fellows and going automobiling with them.

In September she was back in New York and went to better-looking agencies. She was a pretty girl, with light hair and nice blue eyes and round cheeks, and by this time she had all the little marks of a chorus girl. She was sent to try out for "Let It Alone," a big show, and was accepted for it, for her voice was fair and she was graceful. She thought this meant a city job and for a minute she held her breath, but she was picked for the road company. It was a big show and the salary was twenty dollars.

"Let It Alone" rehearsed for a month, without pay, of course—but what did Effie care about that?—and then left New York. The costumes were clean and attractive, the music was pretty and the show was fairly good. Effie played all the big cities, a week or two or even a month in each one, and she learned a lot more.

She learned to work Johns, real city Johns, for presents, and then laugh at them. She learned how to wear her clothes. She learned how to talk, with an affected, lispy, little-girl accent. She learned to pretend to hate traveling, to imagine that everyone recognized her on the street. Then she began to get the feeling of aloofness from the rest of the world, a sort of professional

feeling, and no longer felt pleased when an outsider knew she was in the chorus. She spent every cent of her money staying at fair hotels and dressed in better taste and had massages occasionally. She learned to do her nails better than most manicures and didn't mind admitting it.

She had temptations, too, of course, but they weren't very tempting at that. She was getting along pretty well. She didn't mind a stray kiss or hug from the stage manager between scenes, especially when she stood waiting to go on in a number, for he was a pretty good old scout and didn't mean anything. She didn't mind going on gay parties and having a bit of fun pretending she was a devil of a fellow, but that was about all. She was a good girl.

Then, Ambition was born. It came suddenly, when Gay McCauley, who understudied Evelyn Talbot, was put on in Evelyn's place and stayed on. Why, she herself was as pretty as Gay, and could dance a lot better, and Gay really didn't have much of a voice. So Effie determined to make good, though she would have been ashamed to admit it to anyone and carefully concealed her ideas from the rest of the girls, who were all for spendthrift Johns and easy jobs.

At the end of the season, Effie was back in New York. She had to admit that things had gone pretty well with her—no starvation, no begging for a job from manager to manager, no pawning, no poverty; just jobs, one right after another, and each one a bit ahead of the last; first vaudeville, then a cheap road show, then summer stock, then a good road show and now—

By this time Effie knew a lot of professionals — principals, hundreds of chorus girls (for most girls rehearse with two or three shows before they find one they stick with, and jump from one to another rather rapidly during the season), booking agents and even managers. On Broadway, Effie felt that she had come home. She had a new suit, extreme, severe, correct, and a rather daring hat. Her hair was waved and coiled now, instead of frizzed. It was fun to greet a girl you'd rehearsed with for two weeks, two years ago, as if she were a long-lost cousin and kiss a girl you'd sworn never to speak to again, as if you were renewing home ties. It was even pleasant to nod, with cool superiority, to chorus men, posing in front of good hotels. Even the office boys at the booking agencies knew her and nodded in varied degrees of friendliness. It was good to be in New York.

Then, for weeks, Effie couldn't find a job. Of course it wasn't really as bad as that. She could have gone out with a dozen different small road companies, but she turned them down disdainfully.

Then, just as she was starting to worry, she got a chance, a real chance, a city show. She couldn't believe it, even after the first week of rehearsals, when she saw the number of girls weeded out from two hundred to forty-five. She couldn't believe it when the man who put on the numbers said "You, there," and let her lead the military number. Leading a number in a New York show! Gee! Then she was fitted for costumes and it seemed almost real. There were more rehearsals, all day and all night rehearsals, and she loved them, though she pretended to be peeved, and then there was an opening night and the show made good.

Effie was in a New York chorus!

Two weeks later still another triumph came to her—she was given a line, a real line, to say all alone, before the chorus left the stage. It was put in when a lot of dialogue was cut out, so the show wouldn't run so long. The line was "Come on, girls, there's Mr. Moffett now," and then she and the girls laughed and ran off the stage.

For weeks Effie lived in a sort of delirium. Then she settled down to think things over. It began to look real. She hadn't been on the stage four years yet and she was only twenty-two. She was in a New York show with a line to speak. And she was a good girl!

Ambition grew and grew. She thought of how she was going to get ahead, way ahead. She saw her name in electric lights, her pictures in every newspaper and magazine. Even those that usually didn't run pictures would make an exception—

To be sure, Effie still went out with Johns, but she kept them at a distance and wouldn't see those who annoyed her. She took good care of her hair and her skin and lived in a quiet little apartment hotel. She spent every cent she made, but that was all right, she had to look well, well-groomed and sleek, and, of course, she'd have money—some day—when—

So the months went on, and Effie kept her position and her line, but she didn't get ahead. She tried in every way. She was seldom late, reaching the theater at half-hour. She didn't quarrel with anyone save an occasional chorus girl. Even the principals gave her friendly little nods. But she didn't get ahead, not one little step, though she hunted for hints of vacancies, talking to every manager she knew, to anyone who might have influence.

Some of the other girls were ambitious, too. It isn't as great a crime to be ambitious in a New York show as it is on the road.

"I'm going to have a part in 'Trixy Decides,'" said Patty Emmons, as she curled her red hair into the newest of new coiffures.

"Lucky girl," said the others.

"Yes," said Patty, "Arthur said last night that all I needed was experience, and that I had a wonderful stage presence now and looked perfectly beautiful from the front in that green that I wear in the last number. I'm to see Blandon next week about it; it's really all settled."

Patty got the position and later, when she met the other girls on the street, she didn't know them. And Lola Ray, little and black haired, smiled at Corby, the manager, and a couple of weeks later she got the vacancy when Miss Buller's contract ran out, though she was so awkward that they had to have the ballet master from the Grand Opera Company teach her her solo dance, and even then she cried and cried, trying to learn.

One of the girls said that was always the way: you couldn't get ahead unless you had a pull of some sort, either a rich friend or a manager whom you stood in with. Of course, maybe there were stars who had got ahead by their own ability, but, well, the average one didn't, anyhow.

Three years ago Effie would have doubted this philosophy, but she had seen quite a little. She was a bit sceptical. Of course, there wasn't anything in this about all chorus girls being bad. That was all rot and so was all this about the managers who dog your footsteps, but—somehow—

Nearly four years on the stage and still in the chorus!

Of course, a New York show was a lot ahead, but you can't keep that up forever. She was a good girl and that was something. Now, if a really good chance came along— It would be great to have a real part.

II

Business began falling off and the show got ready to go on the road. Effie didn't want to go, so she began looking around again. Another show was opening, a big show, a big *revue*, one of the big Blandon shows. A year ago Effie wouldn't have even dared to ask for a position. There were famous girls with the Blandon shows, at least a lot of them were, girls you've heard about, girls with millionaire Johns and their own cars, girls who posed for famous artists, girls who got their pictures in the papers.

But Effie did ask for a position and they told her to come for rehearsal and she did and she met Blandon. He was big and fat, black-mustached, heavy-jowled and coarse. He wore loud waistcoats, and he looked at the girls at rehearsals as if he was buying horses or dogs, pushing out a hat hand if a

girl displeased him. Blandon was an authority on chorus girls.

Finally he made his selection, and Effie was in the group that passed inspection, the group that he and several of his friends decided fair enough to appear before New York's most critical audiences, college boys and shoe clerks and out-of-town buyers—well, everyone sees the Blandon *revues.*

As Effie was adjusting her hat over her smooth hair Blandon came up to her. He did not take his thick cigar out of his mouth.

"Hello," he said and put out a pudgy hand, "new girl, eh?"

Effie laughed and tilted her head and looked into his eyes.

"Just new here," she said. "I just closed with 'He Laughed Last.' Didn't want to go on the road, but I've never been with one of your shows before."

"Think you'll like it?"

"I'm—sure of it, if I can make good," said Effie.

"You'll make good, if you please me," said Blandon.

All during rehearsals she saw him. He was always around in his loud clothes, cigar in mouth, usually with a stiff hat tilted back on his head, ordering people around, cursing, praising.

Blandon never made advances to Effie. That was the truth. He never came up and said, "Either you be nice to me or you're fired," as she had heard he had done to other girls. Blandon's reputation was one of the things to talk about in dressing-rooms. He didn't do that. In fact, Effie knew absolutely that if she had let him alone he would have let her alone—and she would have kept her position. That was all there was to it. Part of the girls in the Blandon *revues* got their positions through influence, but there were some who actually did get in because they could sing and dance and look young and pretty-sweet from the front.

There were the usual rehearsals and the show opened. It "went big," of course—it was a Blandon *revue.*

Effie wanted to get ahead. The more she thought of it the more she wanted to. A chorus girl's salary, even in a New York *revue,* isn't as big as it is supposed to be. Effie got $25 a week and she was afraid to ask for more, and there had been three weeks of rehearsals without pay. You didn't have to buy any of your costumes, as in the cheap road shows, of course, but there were always fines and extras and petty grafts, and then Effie wanted to live pretty well. Of course, she grafted all of the meals that she could, but the open season for free dinners from innocent Johns isn't what it used to be, and besides, one must be smart-looking and well groomed.

So Effie smiled at Blandon. Deliberately, she attracted his attention. Deliberately, she tried to make him like her. Effie knew that Blandon could make almost anyone, theatrically. He owned the show, he could do what he wanted to with the cast. She had one chance. She wanted a part, a chance to make good.

Was it wrong? Effie had no great ideas about morality. She never had had, and four years on the stage had left her rather dulled. After all, it was just an accident that she was a good girl. There hadn't been anyone she had cared much about. If the stage manager, back with "Let It Alone," had really cared for her or pretended to care—well, here was a chance.

Blandon liked Effie. Oh, not a great deal, he knew too many women, he had had too many affairs for that, but she was cute and pretty and blonde and dainty and a good dancer. So he patted her on the shoulder and squeezed her hand. He took her out to luncheon one day—it was after a morning rehearsal and Effie had planned to leave the theatre when he did. He was rather decent at luncheon, just a coarse joke or two, that was all. He was rather unpleasant, but then, men are men, and she had met hundreds of them and Blandon was no worse than the others and besides—he was somebody big, he could do something for her.

Then Cora Lee Alberts, who did the

Butterfly and the Rose dances, gave in her notice. She had married a Pittsburgher with money and she was taking him West just as fast as she could, before he found out too much about her past—or her present. There would be a vacancy!

Effie looked for Blandon, but he didn't come behind for several nights. Finally, she met him in the wings, just before her time to go on in the Rose number.

"Well, Miss Alberts went and did it," she said.

"Yes," said Blandon, "that's the way. Help a girl, give her a start and there you are, there you are, that's gratitude. She couldn't walk across the stage three years ago and now look at her, look at her. Not a big part, but one of the prettiest, cleanest, nicest little parts in New York, two dances, one with the chorus. What more could she want?" Blandon growled.

"I—I wish," began Effie, then, courageously, "Is there anyone to take her place? You know she didn't have a regular understudy. If—if there was, if you thought there was a chance that I—" She smiled the best she could, though her mouth trembled.

Blandon let his fat hand rest on her shoulder.

"Well, now," he said, "I'll think about that. You might be able to get away with it." He looked at her, from her pointed pink satin slippers to her fluffed pink satin hat. "Well," he repeated, "I'll think about that. Ever have a part before?"

"I had a—some lines before, and on the road I understudied. I believe, though, I could—could get away with it. I—I know the songs and I—I'd love to try."

"I'll think it over," said Blandon. It was time, then, for her to go on.

Two days, three, four—she saw Blandon only to smile at him. She couldn't start with him again. She knew that. It was up to him now. If he wanted her for the part—. Well, she'd have to wait.

She thought he'd telephone or leave a note for her, but he didn't. She thought Burns, the stage manager, looked at her rather hard and hoped he was visualizing her in the Rose number, as principal instead of chorus girl.

Then, one night—

"What are you going to do after the show? One of them Johns of yours going to buy wine for you?" asked Blandon.

"No," said Effie, "I wasn't going to do anything at all. Did you want to see me about—about anything?"

"Why, yes, thought we might have a bite to eat, some place, and then talk over that Alberts part. You might do, after all."

Effie nodded. She couldn't say anything. Was it—her chance—two numbers—lots of lines—in a big Broadway show?

Blandon was talking. ". . . so after the show, you meet me here at the door and we'll go in my car, see? Don't take an hour to dress."

The show passed unnoticed, almost. It gets to be mechanical to change costumes and go through numbers. After the finale, Effie dressed with care.

"Got a date?" asked Doris Hill, the girl on her right.

She nodded, trying to be careless.

"I bet she's got a date with the boss," said another girl, "saw him talking to her quite a lot lately. Some girl, she is, eh, Ef?"

Effie smiled. They needn't know—yet.

She met Blandon at the door. Silently they left the theater and entered his car, a big one, upholstered in grey. Almost silently the car took them up Broadway, past the restaurants and cafés, past the lights, up a quieter street, then to Blandon's house.

"I'll have a part, a real part," thought Effie.

The house was gaudily furnished and lighted. There were too many pictures on the walls, too many little, needless, meaningless ornaments and draperies, yet it was expensive, lavish. Effie liked it.

A negro servant served a substantial

supper in the dining room. Then they went to the living room. Effie couldn't breathe comfortably. They talked about the theater, the girls, the principals. Effie told jokes, tried to be witty and flattering, even made Blandon laugh. Blandon told jokes, too. Then they talked about the part.

"Here," he said, "before I forget. Alberts leaves next Thursday. In a day or two, say Saturday, you give this note to Burns. Don't say anything for a day or two. Too many worrying about that part now. Let 'em worry for a while."

At the table he scrawled a few lines with a big pen and handed it to Effie. She read it.

Burns: Try out Dale in the Alberts part. Think you can work her in. J. B.

That was all. She'd be a star yet. This was the first step.

"What are you thinking about?" asked Blandon. "Come over here to your old Uncle J. B. and be sociable." She came over with a laugh.

"Come, sit on Uncle J. B.'s lap," said Blandon.

III

THE next day Effie didn't go to the theater. Burns could fine her, she didn't care. What if he did fine her? Wouldn't she be a principal in a day or two?

She had been lying on the bed trying to read; now she got up to assure herself that Blandon's note was safe. It was. Even without the note, of course, it would be just the same, but now—it was something tangible.

To-morrow, or the next day, Saturday, she'd tell Burns. Wouldn't the other girls be jealous, though? What if they did talk? None of them was a bit better. She wanted to get ahead. She knew that Blandon wouldn't help her long. He got tired of people pretty quickly, she had heard about some of the times, but, well, she'd get a start, anyhow, and if—

The next day she went back to the theater. The girls asked what was the matter and she said she had had a cold in her head. It was as good an excuse as any.

Saturday she woke up with the idea that something was going to happen. Then she knew—it was the day to tell Burns about the new job. Well, she'd get there early, before the matinée—Burns was always early—and have it over with. She wondered how he would take it—he had always been pretty nice to her.

She dressed slowly and then went out, wandering down Broadway. She'd be a principal before long! She felt of the little sheet of paper in her purse. She nodded to half a dozen acquaintances, crisp little nods. They'd soon be pointing her out as someone who was arriving—"That's Effie Dale, got a fine part in Blandon's new *revue,* quite a girl."

She ate half a sandwich and tried to drink some tea and then went to the theater.

Burns was already there. She could see him on the bare stage. He was talking to a new girl, a girl with a thin face and pale hair. The girl had on a wonderful fur coat. Effie wondered who she was. Someone to take her place in the chorus? Still, the fur coat— Rhodes, the musical director, was there, too. She wondered what he was doing there so early. They were both speaking to the new girl.

Effie came closer.

"Mr. Burns," she called, not very loud.

He turned toward her.

"What do you want, Dale?"

He wouldn't call her "Dale" much longer. He could just put on a "Miss," she decided.

"Mr. Burns," she said, "may I speak to you for a minute? I have something to tell you, please."

Burns came over to her. There was a crease of annoyance between his eyes.

"Yes?" he asked, impatiently.

She fumbled with her purse.

"Here," she said, "it's a note from Mr. Blandon, about—about the Alberts part."

Burns took the note and frowned even harder. He held it close to his eyes in the half light, then he shook his head.

"Something wrong some place," he muttered.

"Why—why—what's the matter? What do you mean?"

Burns pointed a finger to the new girl and spoke in a half whisper.

"She—she just was sent up from the office for the part. Blandon 'phoned me to give it to her. She's to have a couple of teachers to coach her."

"Why, she said—why—why, I won't need teachers, I—why he promised me—" She stopped.

Burns looked at her curiously. After all, it was Blandon's affair, not his. For his part, he preferred Dale. She was a steady little thing, and could dance.

"I'm just obeying orders," he said, "but you stick around. The boss'll be here any minute now. Said he was coming right up, when he 'phoned."

He handed back the note. Effie stuffed it into her purse and sat down to wait.

The new girl was having her voice tried. It wasn't strong, not as good as hers, but Effie had to agree with the director that it would probably do.

Effie waited, five minutes, ten minutes—ten years. A couple of chorus men strolled in, looked over the mail and read the rehearsal notices on the call board. From the dressing-rooms and the steps came the sound of voices. She got up. She'd have to go and make up—still—she hesitated.

Then Blandon came in. His big coat was over his arm, a thick cane in his hand, his hat pushed to one side.

"Hello, there, Miss Langan," he called, cheerily. "Got here all right, I see?" and he shook hands with the slim girl.

It was true then! Blandon was talking to Burns and the musical director and the new girl, giving directions, pointing to things with his big cane. The girl giggled rather foolishly, Effie thought, and said something in a high, affected voice.

Effie started to go to her dressing-room, then turned back again. She had to find out—now.

She went nearer to the group.

"Mr.—Blandon," she said.

Blandon turned, as Burns had done, excused himself, came over to her. He, too, looked annoyed.

"What's the matter, girlie?"

"You—you said I—might have the Alberts part and I told Mr. Burns and he said that—" She couldn't go on.

"Oh—that! Sorry, girlie. It's one of the things that can't be helped, in this business. That's Lilybelle Langan. She's a niece of my friend Freddie Jerrers, and she's going with that Fritz Hulbert. You've heard of him—all kinds of a millionaire. Had to do it, girlie." He started to go. Effie put out her hand to detain him.

"Then—you're not going to—keep your promise to—to—help me get ahead?" she asked.

Blandon shook off her hand rather carelessly, laughed—then patted her on the shoulder.

"Oh, don't act like that about it," he said. "Sure, there'll be other parts, later on. I'll get you something, some day. You've got a pretty good job, haven't you? Lots of girls wish they were in your shoes. And some day we'll have another little old supper party, eh, girlie? Cheer up!" Another pat, and he walked back to the little group in the center of the stage, hitting at a chair with his thick cane.

Effie went to her dressing-room. From her purse she took the little sheet of paper.

"Well," she said, and laughed, at least it was fairly near a laugh, "his I. O. U. is no good." She tore the paper into bits and flung them behind her as she entered the dressing-room.

"Hurry up, they've called fifteen minutes," said Doris Hill, who was nearly made up. "Ain't she putting on airs, coming in late like that? Just like a principal—my word!"

Effie Dale had been in the chorus for four years.

THE DEATH OF A PRESENT-DAY PIERROT

By Harold Cook

IT was not the traditional death of Pierrot, ah, no! There was no moonlit garden with its white marble bench where Columbine was sitting holding the weary, weary head of Pierrot in her tiny lap. There was no nightingale whose note, passionate as muted violins, shot with pain the aching heart that would tremble no longer with love and delight or with quickly-danced-away anger. In *that* garden when Pierrot died, panting in the arms of Columbine, there was a silver moon to shed its tears upon them; which moved the very oceans in her sad pacings after the death of her child. She had shone on his cradle and the night he was born she had laid a gleam over him and made him the lovely vagrant that he was. People had said, "He is like a white birch in a moonlit forest. He is like a white ribbon in the wind."

And *then* there was the fear, that hideous fear. Death! To die and leave all this beauty and Columbine's lovely eyes! Worms and dust and the chanting of priests with their candles! No, no, he would not die; it was impossible. There was the terrible silence, that awful heaviness which forebodes grief, broken only by the frantic little sobs of Columbine. Dews of night and of Death lay on his white face. And then with a cry he died.

The nightingale ceased. Clouds covered the moon; the pool was dark and no longer threw innumerable diamonds over the white breast of a swan on its surface. . . .

It was not the traditional death of Pierrot, ah, no! He was coming home from a rehearsal of "The Mauve Countess," and while crossing the street he fell into a man-hole.

THE MOTH'S COMPLAINT

By Harry Kemp

THE butterfly is slain, they say
By the first breath of cold—
But, oh, for his one perfect day
On wings of braided gold!

THE PIED PIPER OF CHATHAM SQUARE

By Oliver Madox Hueffer

IT began when little Miss Winder said that she liked a man whom all the rest of us severely hated. She said that he must be lovable because children and animals all loved him. Then the strange man put his oar in.

We were all dining at Kitty's, which, as you know if you know Gotham at all, is in a side street off Washington Square and prides itself on being artistic and Bohemian and Parisian and part of the Village and feeds you cheaply and nastily and has the frowsiest atmosphere in all America. I hate the place cordially, but little Miss Winder is somewhat bizarrely taken with it, and so, obviously, I go there. There were six of us that night at the long table near the window and one of us was the stranger who answered Miss Winder.

"I knew a man once who was loved by every child and animal who ever saw him," he said, "and he was a murderer." And then he told us the story of Pancho.

"I first met him in a one-man settlement house run by a lunatic friend of mine named Purchas, in Catherine Street, behind Chatham Square. He called the place the Undenominational Water House, and did quite a lot of good in a mad kind of way that made the authorities hate him no end. It was the year when half the East Side banks failed and, altogether, times were bad. So Purchas started a wooden animal toy industry for the down and outers. I was one of them at the time and that was how I came to know Purchas—and Pancho. Purchas taught us English—most of us were Russians and Italians of one kind or another—and he taught us how to carve wooden elephants and gave us sixty cents for a day of five hours, so that we could look for permanent situations the rest of the time. A good kind of lunatic old Purchas was. We used to work all over the Water House. I was one of half a dozen that camped in his bedroom, and the whole place was snowed under with chips. He kept it up all through the winter, and there were never less than forty of us, though of course the numbers varied. And one of us was this Pancho, the Mexican.

Pancho was one of the youngest of the crowd, and he was one of the few who spoke distinguishable English. He liked me, because I once spent a week at Tampico and could speak Spanish. I found a job after a bit and didn't see any more of him for a time until one day about a month later I met him on East Broadway carrying a baby. It was very small and surprisingly ugly, and altogether it reminded me of the baby gorilla that they wheel about the Bronx Zoo in a perambulator.

"How old is it?" I asked. I was so surprised to see Pancho with it that I could not think of anything else to say.

"A year. Perhaps two. Quien sabe?"

"But—isn't it yours?"

"I am not its father," said Pancho with a certain pride. "I *killed* its father and its mother."

Of course I asked him to tell me all about it, but he said he had to take the

baby for its airing and would tell me later.

I took him up to my room that afternoon and there he told me the story of the killing of Pablo Pascales.

Pancho's father lived in the San Pedro Hills, near San Luis Potosi and worked in a silver mine. He was a more or less pure-blooded Serrano Indian—one of the tribes that took to the hills when the Spaniards came and have stayed there ever since. He was a good worker and as contented as a Mexican can be until one day a brother went off to join a revolution and came back with more money than Pancho's father had ever seen in his life. So Pancho's father made up his mind to do likewise, and the next time they came round offering five dollars a day and a share of the loot he decided to join—I think it was Madero in those days. The doctor at the mine had taken a liking to him and tried to make him stop at home with his family. And this is what he said to the doctor. Pancho heard it because he was inquisitive and was hiding in a mosquito tangle to hear what they said:

"It is like this, senor," said Pancho's father. "Here I make but fifty cents a day. And on that I must support"—he ticked them off on his fingers—"a wife, seven children, my mother, my wife's mother, two aunts—and a mistress. It cannot be done."

So he loped off across the mountains and Pancho, who was fourteen at the time, went with him. And for several years they revoluted together and had a good time and made money. At the time of the American Flag trouble at Tampico they were with the Villa crowd, and when Zaragosa went out they went in, under Gonzales.

It was in Tampico that Pancho first came across Giulia. She was a girl from the south, from some village near Guernavaca and had been carried off against her will, as is the local custom, by one of Huerta's colonels. He traded her off later to Pascales, who was then a Huertista, but after a time went over to Villa for value received and took Giulia along with him.

You know, or perhaps you don't, that there are almost as many women and babies in a Mexican army as there are men. The women dress like men and ride with them with the babies strapped on their backs. The women really work hardest of all, because not only they do their share of the fighting, but after it is over they go 'round mutilating the wounded and finishing them off with long knives. Then they clean up and cook and generally make things pleasant for the men. The babies, as soon as they are big enough to crawl, start their revolutionary careers by going through the pockets of the dead. Giulia, I gathered from Pancho, was quite famous for the neatness and dispatch with which she could finish off the wounded. Also she was the sweetest, the gentlest and the most beautiful girl anywhere between Yucatan and the Rio Grande.

As soon as he had taken Tampico, General Gonzales lost no time sending out a force after the beaten Federals who were retreating south towards Tuxpan. There were about fourteen hundred of them—of the Villistas I mean—under Colonel Pascales, and Giulia of course went along with him and so did Pancho. Giulia had her baby strapped to her back along with her rifle and her bandolier, and although it was only a few weeks old she used to tell Pancho that it already showed extraordinary quickness in going through a dead man's pockets. I think myself it was only her maternal pride made her think so.

Love affairs go quickly in Mexico, and before they had ridden a dozen miles out of Tampico, Pancho and the girl had everything fixed up. Naturally the first thing to be done was to get Colonel Pascales out of the way. Giulia's idea was to knife him that night when they came to camp, but Pancho thought they might as well give nature a chance and see if the Federals couldn't finish him off first.

So they waited over until the morn-

ing, and in the morning they caught up with Zaragosa's army, which proved much stronger than they expected, and gave them a satisfactory thrashing. Unhappily, though, Pascales came off without a scratch.

Giulia was very anxious to knife him without further delay, but again Pancho counseled patience. Next morning reinforcements came along and they had another go at the Federals. That time they won and the Federals bolted. But they managed to wound Pascales first. He wasn't seriously hurt, only a bullet in the thigh or something like that, but he couldn't walk, so the men who were with him propped him up against a tree and went off to look for Giulia so that she could patch him up. And that was how the tragedy happened.

Giulia had just finished off a couple of Federal prisoners with her knife, but as soon as she heard about Pascales she dropped everything else and went to him at once. It so happened that Pancho heard of it at exactly the same time and he went off at once also. But as he was in another part of the field—it was a marsh to be exact—he was a few minutes late in getting there.

The whole trouble arose through the tree. There is only one place and way to knife a man satisfactorily—in the Little Mary. And you can't do that when he is sitting propped up against a tree. So Giulia had first of all to put her baby down and then to take hold of Pascale's feet and drag him away from the tree. Then she wasted a few minutes telling him exactly what she thought of him, and she was still doing so when Pancho came creeping up on the other side of the tree.

As he explained to me he could only see the one figure that seemed to be staggering about by the tree—Giulia was dressed like a man, you understand. He was so anxious to get the job through before any one should see him that he loosed off at once. And when he ran up to make sure of things he found that he had killed poor, loving, gentle Giulia instead of the undesirable Pascale.

There she lay, her knife still in her hand, still making feeble attempts to stick it into Pascale, whom she had fallen almost on top of, but Pancho could see at once that there was no hope for her. So first of all he knifed the Colonel and then he fetched the baby and put it in her arms and then he knelt down beside her and said a few prayers for her soul, and then their lips met in one last lingering kiss, as the story-books have it—and she died.

Poor Pancho broke down utterly as he told me about it, and how tender and gentle a dove she was and how her whole nature was that of an angel from Heaven and what a wonderful hand she was at making tamales. From his description I gathered that she must have been a cross between Santa Teresa and Florence Nightingale, though of course he may have exaggerated.

By bad luck someone had watched the whole thing from behind another tree and went and told the second in command, so if a friend hadn't come along and warned Pancho in time he would have followed his Giulia at short notice. He got away all right, taking the baby along, as a last memento of the dear departed, I expect. It seems though that Pascales was an influential person with a large family, and Pancho got the fear of death into him and never stopped till he was over the Rio Grande. After that he somehow drifted to New York, baby and all, and there, as I have said, I ran up against him. He couldn't speak any English at first and had a pretty rough time, but somehow he managed to pull through and keep the baby alive. Out of the fifty cents he got making toy elephants for Purchas, he used to give thirty to a woman for looking after the kid and lived on the rest himself.

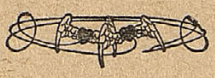
Well, as I said, if there ever was a man who loved children and animals and was loved by them, it was Pancho. Whenever he appeared on the street it was as if the Pied Piper had happened along. And stray dogs would come from miles around, just for the pleasure of nuzzling their noses into his

hand. But whether you would call him a lovable person I don't know.

He stopped speaking, bowed to little Miss Winder and called for his bill.

"But what became of him in the end?" she asked, avoiding the question.

"He's up the river now, serving a life sentence. The baby died suddenly and he took it into his head the woman had neglected it. So he knifed her and her husband and a few others, I forget how many. But any child there would tell you that Catherine Street hadn't been the same since he left it."



THE CELTS

By John McClure

WE are the grey dreamers
With nets of moonlight
That always go a-hunting
About the fall o' night,

That softly go a-hunting
In quest of strange birds
With a thin net of moonlight,
A grey net of words,

That steal through dim forests
By dark Lethe-streams
With pale snare of moonshine
And grey bait of dreams

Until we catch the prize-catch,
The queer bird we get—
The dreamy, fluttering Soul o' the World
Caught in a silver net.



THERE LIVES A WOMAN NEXT DOOR TO ME

By John Merlin

THERE lives a woman next door to me who keeps a dog tied in the back yard. This dog howls and howls. Sometimes the woman comes out and talks to it in a high, strident voice. Then the dog is silent.

But I would rather hear the dog.

For there is something wild and untamable in the frenzy of the animal.

He is crying out to a deaf world for open spaces and the freedom of his ancestors.

But the woman . . . there is a starved satisfaction in her voice, a contentment with her constricted life, a vapid half-idiotic garrulousness that makes me want to howl like the dog.

IS MR. DONNA MOBILE TOO?

By Randolph Bartlett

WHY cannot women understand? I loved Clara for her quietness, her reserve, her calmness. I could sit in the same room with her for hours, without either of us speaking, and be perfectly contented. To call on her was like reading Tennyson's "Lotus Eaters." In order to be free to enjoy the maximum of Clara I had to tell her that I loved her, and she confessed a reciprocal emotion.

Then I met Maizie. When I was bored I would take her to some place where we could dance, hear rotten but spirited music, and drink badly mixed concoctions. Maizie would drive away the blues from a manufacturer of indigo. Did I love Clara and her restfulness any less? Certainly not—more. I explained this to her when she reproached me, but she could not understand, and told me I need not call any more. It was a distinct loss, for Clara occupied an important place in my life that Maizie could not fill.

Then I met Nora. Often when the day was fine and not too warm, we would take the ferry to Staten Island and stroll hour after hour, mile after mile, along the shady roads, among the shady old settlements, and have inferior beer and stale sandwiches at shady taverns by the roadside. Nora is strong, she walks with a splendid swing, she never tires. She is an ideal companion for a day out of doors, but I cannot imagine her in a jolly crowd at a cabaret. Did I love Maizie less? Certainly not—more. But one day she saw Nora and me stretched out beneath a tree, resting by the turnpike, as she sped past in an automobile, and at once I was in the discard. I missed Maizie, for she gave me something Nora would not, or could not, but she refused to understand.

Then I met Sylvia. When I felt like taking my brains out for an airing, I would go down to her studio apartment in Gramercy Park, and we would talk, far into the night, about men and books, women and pictures, music and politics. She has an active and well-informed mind, and there seemed to be no feminine foolishness about her. Then some good friend told Nora that I was becoming very attentive to Sylvia, and the next time I asked her to go to Staten Island with me she refused. She would not explain, but I understood. Yet I certainly remember with even greater pleasure than ever, our days of fresh air and exhilaration. It was something she apparently could not comprehend.

Then I met Cordelia. Because she was a substantial, permanent sort of all-round girl, and it seemed the thing to do, I married her. Our home is a delightful place. I know right where everything I want is to be found, there is always an ice-cold siphon, and the machinery of the house never creaks. Cordelia is a wonderful wife. I sent Sylvia an invitation to the wedding, but she did not come, and when I telephoned to her, upon returning from our honeymoon, to ask when I might call and tell her about everything, she said I ought to be ashamed of myself, and hung up the receiver. Yet I appreciated her even more than ever, a fact which, being merely a woman after all, she could not understand.

From time to time I feel certain vague impulses toward indulging myself in

feminine companions other than my wife, and distinctly different from her. Eventually, of course, I shall permit one of these impulses to guide me, Cordelia will hear about it, and then—divorce. It is a terrible thought, not merely that I may lose Cordelia, but that she should ever believe I no longer love her, when anything I may do will only make me love her the more.

Why are there no women who possess all the qualities every man loves?

Why cannot women understand?



THE ENCHANTRESS

By Margery Land Mason

TO me she is the most wonderful woman in the world. Her skin has the ivory whiteness of a magnolia blossom touched with a delicate tinge of pearl-pink; her eyes are great wells of soft star-light wherein elves of mockery dance; her lips are like the blood-red heart of a pomegranate; her hair is a web of spun moonlight and silver. She moves with the quick grace of a bird winging from tree-top to tree-top. Her laugh is like the crystal carol of bells. Her clothes cling to her as do petals to a flower. She wears evanescent, piquant little frocks of pastel shading and shadow. She is a butterfly—a creature of dawn-mist and sea-foam. She is the apotheosis of sun-topped clouds, a bubble of moonshine, the incarnate spirit of dew on roses, tongues of flame, glints of diamonds. Her moods and fancies are like the ever-changing glow of the setting sun. There is about her an airy fragrance of old-fashioned gardens, and rose jars. She possesses the frothy nebulosity of a luminous star cluster. The touch of her hand is like a gentle fall of dew. The touch of her lip is like old wine to the blood. She is an elf, a dryad, a sprite of forest and dell, of mountain and tinkling, pebbled brook. To me she is the most wonderful woman in the world. Who is she? She is the wife of that thick-necked, red-faced fathead across the street who picks his teeth, eats porterhouse steaks and smokes Key West cigars.



EVEN marriage, the worst of follies, has one sound merit: it is impossible to commit it every day.



THE ideal wife is one who never suspects her husband of what she would not do herself.



IN a man's innermost heart, the girl who rejects him is always the incomparable she.

LOST SHEEP

By Belford Forrest

PEOPLE APPEARING IN THE PLAY.

MRS. WAMPUS.
MARY WAMPUS.
MARTHA WAMPUS.
DORCAS WAMPUS.
THE REVEREND WILLIAM WAMPUS.
FATHER ANTHONY.

The scene of this absurdity is the garden of a somewhat dissipated, detached villa in a remote London suburb.

It is a conventional suburban garden—a tree or two, an assortment of shrubs, a lawn, rose bushes, flower beds, gravel walks—carefully inclosed within high brick walls, in deference to the English passion for privacy.

In the center of the wall, facing the audience, is an opaque iron gate. It stands ajar.

On the right of anyone entering from the gate is the rear of the villa.

Against the wall on the left is a small shelter for horticultural implements, or, in the vulgar tongue, a tool shed.

It is a hot afternoon.

Beneath the shade of a leafy tree, near the house, sits MRS. WAMPUS *with her three daughters:* MARY, MARTHA, *and* DORCAS.

MRS. WAMPUS (*wife of the Reverend* WILLIAM WAMPUS, *of the Methodist Chapel*) *is a very spacious woman: physically maternal and mentally middle-class.*

Her daughters are nice girls; a great comfort to their mother, who is bringing them up to be ladies.

Moreover, they are of marriageable age; but that is not a subject upon which MRS. WAMPUS *encourages discussion. She wishes to keep them, as long as possible, nice girls.*

At the rise of the curtain, MRS. WAMPUS, MARY *and* MARTHA *are busily darning the family hose, which they take from a table before them.*

DORCAS *is lying on a rug at* MARY'S *feet, reading a book. She is the youngest* WAMPUS, *about* 17, *and, consequently, perhaps, a little spoilt. She is alarmingly good looking—for a* WAMPUS—*and knows it.*

DORCAS:

(*Closing her book.*) Ma!

MRS. WAMPUS:

(*Her speech betrays a lack of the educational advantages enjoyed by her offspring. Her h's are seldom where they should be.*) Yes, my dear.

DORCAS:

How long are we going to live in this house? I don't like it.

MRS. WAMPUS:

Dorcas Wampus! Whathever are you thinkin' about? We've only been 'ere two days.

DORCAS:

And *nights!* (*The girls exchange glances.*)

MRS. WAMPUS:

Didn't you 'ear your Father say at breakfast that the Chapel 'ouse wouldn't be ready for a month? We ought to be very thankful to 'ave such a charmin' place to come to. So quiet and peaceful after Clapham.

THE GIRLS:

Quiet! Charming! Peaceful!

MARY:

(*She is angular and sentimental.*) It's quiet enough in the *daytime.* I miss the Clapham people dropping in.

MRS. WAMPUS:

My dear, you can't expect to 'ave callers right away. People 'ardly know we're 'ere yet. After the Teachers' Meetin' on Friday, things will be different.

MARY:

I hope so.

MRS. WAMPUS:

There are a lot of nice people 'ere.

MARY:

Well, I hope they won't all call in the middle of the night. Papa has had to get up twice already and send people away—automobile people, too, who made a frightful noise with their horns. One of them was very rude to poor Papa—I heard him.

MRS. WAMPUS:

Mary, my dear, those were not callers. They were intoxicated persons who had gone astray. Your Father is going to complain to the authorities.

MARTHA:

(*She ominously resembles her mother, and wears heavy, iron-rimmed spectacles.*) Well, Ma, the sooner we get out of here the better. There's something uncanny about the place.

MRS. WAMPUS:

Fiddlesticks! What's come to you girls? I can't see hanything wrong with the place. The 'ouse is very substantial and the plumbin's hexcellent.

THE GIRLS:

(*Their sense of refinement violated.*) Plumbing!

DORCAS:

(*As she rises and walks away, interesting herself in the garden.*) To hear you talk, Ma, people would think Pa was a plumber instead of a preacher.

MRS. WAMPUS:

(*In a monotone of reproach.*) Dorcas!

MARY:

Plumbing or no plumbing, I wish we were back in Clapham. All the nice people here go to church, and only the riffraff attend chapel.

MRS. WAMPUS:

Not-a-*tall,* my dear. You're quite mistaken. I've been readin' in the paper about the Vicar—a long article, with a picture of 'im in one of those queer 'ats. 'E's turned 'igh church, calls himself Father Anthony, has hearly service everyday and 'igh Mass on Sundays. The people don't 'old with such goin's on, and I'm sure I don't blame 'em. Quite a number are leaving the Church and coming over to Chapel. It's a great hopportunity for your Pa.

MARTHA:

I wish Pa was Church instead of Chapel. It's more refined. (*At this moment Dorcas emerges from the tool shed, which she has been investigating. In her hands are two empty champagne bottles. She swings them about her head like Indian clubs.*) Why, Dorcas!

DORCAS:

This shed is full of these bottles. There must have been a wedding before the people left.

MRS. WAMPUS:

How extraordinary!

MARY AND MARTHA:

(*Their imaginations stimulated.*) Champagne bottles!

DORCAS:

(*Ceasing to swing the bottles, realising the irreverence of her exercises.*) Yes, champagne.

MARTHA AND MARY:

(*Entranced.*) Champagne!

(*A silence.*)

FATHER ANTHONY:

(*So fascinated are the Wampuses by these ravished relics of a departed paganism, that they fail to notice the entrance, through the gate, of Father Anthony. He is a typical Anglican, with a rigid face, and totally devoid of a sense of humor. He overhears the last of their champagne rhapsody, and stands, looking, with pastoral solicitude, at Dorcas. Moved with compassion, he advances across the lawn, and addresses Mrs. Wampus, in a parochial voice.*) Good afternoon!

MRS. WAMPUS:

(*With immense enthusiasm.*) Well, well! If it isn't Father Anthony! We were just talking about you. It's a reglar case of angels rushin' in. I 'ardly expected you'd be around so soon. Martha, give the Vicar a chair.

FATHER ANTHONY:

(*Meditatively.*) Fresh faces! How sad!

MRS. WAMPUS:

(*Abandoning the family hose in honor of her guest, and settling down to a real chat.*) Sit down, Vicar. Make yourself at 'ome.

FATHER ANTHONY:

(*Absorbed in his mission, he accepts a chair from Martha, with a silent bow, and braces himself to perform, unflinchingly, a painful duty. Martha passes up stage, where she is joined by her sisters. Dorcas, considerably embarrassed, is endeavouring to conceal the champagne bottles behind her back. Her efforts only result in a chime of loud, unhallowed clinks. This completes the confusion of the girls, and they begin to giggle. Their Mother looks 'round at them reprovingly, whereupon they beat a disordered retreat into the house.*) Madam, as Vicar of this Parish, I must speak plainly.

MRS. WAMPUS:

That's me hexactly, Vicar. "Plain speakin' and 'igh livin'!" is my motto.

FATHER ANTHONY:

(*Firm of purpose, unmoved by the overwhelming affability of Mrs. Wampus.*) I shall not beat about the bush, Madam. Between us, there can be no compromise.

MRS. WAMPUS:

Now, Vicar, I wouldn't say that. We 'ave our differences, of course, but, at bottom, we are all 'uman bein's. There's a Divinity that shapes our ends, and makes us all akin, I say.

FATHER ANTHONY:

You cannot be mistaken as to the purpose of my visit. This house has long been a disgrace to the neighbourhood.

MRS. WAMPUS:

Goodness, gracious! Whatever *is* the matter with it? The girls 'ave been complaining all day, but I can't see a thing wrong with it myself.

FATHER ANTHONY:

I must beg of you not to trifle with me, Madam. As you well know, I am not referring to the material fabric of this unhappy edifice, but the spiritual condition of its inhabitants. Your presence in our midst—to speak with moderation—is undesirable; a blot upon the fair name of Higher Hampstead, and I shall, as in the case of your predecessor, do my utmost to have you removed.

MRS. WAMPUS:

(*Her wrath rising.*) Removed!

FATHER ANTHONY:

Yes, Madam. There is no other course open to me. It is my duty to protect my people. In the meantime, I shall continue to visit you and these poor girls. Our own people must be my first consideration, but, believe me, I have a very tender regard for the lost sheep—

MRS. WAMPUS:

(*Her indignation boiling over.*) Lost sheep! Father Anthony, I may not be 'igh church, nor any church at all—but, I 'ope I knows what becomes a lady, and shall control my tongue accordingly. Removed, indeed! You can make up your mind to this—we are here to stay. There's people 'ere that needs us hevery bit as much as they needs you.

FATHER ANTHONY:

Madam, I cannot allow you—

MRS. WAMPUS:

(*Her fury unabated.*) And, let me tell you this—'Igher 'Ampstead is waking hup! Some of your best people are coming to us.

FATHER ANTHONY:

I fervently pray that such is not the case. I can only say that it is very painful to me that you should adopt this brazen attitude.

MRS. WAMPUS:

Brazen hattitude!

FATHER ANTHONY:

If you are yourself dead to shame, and impervious to correction, have you no sense of responsibility for these young lives that you are hastening to perdition? These poor, misguided girls—

MRS. WAMPUS:

Vicar or no Vicar—don't you say a word against my girls.

FATHER ANTHONY:

God forbid that I should! Doubtless they have been led astray by persons older (*Mrs. Wampus winces*) and better able to distinguish between right and wrong.

MRS. WAMPUS:

(*Verging on a collapse. Very sotto voce.*) Of all the impudence!

FATHER ANTHONY:

I cannot leave here without some practical expression of my deep concern for their condition. (*Rising.*) I would greatly appreciate it if you would permit me to enter the house and speak to them.

MRS. WAMPUS:

(*Ore rotundo.*) Sit down! (*He sits.*) You will do nothin' of the sort. You will not enter that 'ouse now, nor at *any* time, and you will not move from 'ere until you explain yourself. Bein' the Vicar of this Parish don't give you the right to come in 'ere and 'url insults at a lady's 'ead—not at *my* 'ead any'ow. It's a long worm that can't turn when it's trod on! (*At this moment, the noise of her indignation is stilled by the birdlike laughter of the girls. They come from the house in a charming procession. Martha is at their head, bearing a tray, on which is all the pleasant paraphernalia of afternoon tea. Mary and Dorcas follow her, with a cake basket and plates of bread and butter. Mrs. Wampus violently signals to them to withdraw—but in vain. They are intent on their ministry, and cluster around the table, depositing their burdens.*)

FATHER ANTHONY:

(*Rising as the girls approach.*) Ah! How forunate! I am, indeed, thankful for such an opportunity. (*Addressing the group with pulpit persuasiveness.*) My poor children (*the girls simultaneously turn their heads, regarding him with virginal curiosity*), for I feel that you are, in spite of your unhappy circumstances, *my* children—

MRS. WAMPUS:

(*Sweeping the girls from before her with outstretched arms.*) They are nothing of the sort. Mary, Martha, Dorcas—go into the 'ouse and remain there. (*Utterly bewildered, the girls turn to obey their Mother, just as the*

Reverend William Wampus, their father, enters through the gate. He is a meek man, in quasi-clerical dress—a short, ill-fitting black coat, grey trousers, a low collar with ready-made white bow attached, and a depressing black straw hat, about two sizes too large for him. He bestows upon the scene the benediction of his smile. Dorcas instantly runs to him and flings her arms around him, implanting on his upturned cheek a resounding kiss.)

DORCAS:

Oh, you darling! I thought you were going to be late for tea. (*Mrs. Wampus, nursing her wrath, does not deign to notice the return of her spouse. Father Anthony stands staring in horror at Dorcas and her Father. The tide of righteous indignation rises high within him. Mr. Wampus, freeing himself from Dorcas, approaches the Vicar, and holds out his hand in greeting.*)

WILLIAM WAMPUS:

My dear Brother, it gives me great joy to meet you here.

FATHER ANTHONY:

(*Deliberately placing his hands behind his back.*) Sir, I have not the *honor* of your acquaintance, but judging from your appearance—

WILLIAM WAMPUS:

I am William Wampus—the Reverend William Wampus.

FATHER ANTHONY:

(*His zeal consuming him.*) Then, Sir, let me tell you that the scene I have just witnessed has no parallel in my pastoral experience. (*Moving towards the gate.*) And I shall make it my business, immediately, to inform the misguided souls who brought you to Higher Hampstead, *where*, and under *what circumstances* I made your acquaintance.

WILLIAM WAMPUS:

My dear Sir—

MRS. WAMPUS:

(*In a stentorian tone.*) William, sit down! (*Mr. Wampus instantly subsides in a dull amaze. Mrs. Wampus rises, and, with considerable agility, for a woman with her encumbrances, pursues the retreating Father Anthony.*) No you don't, young man! You don't leave this garden till you've explained yourself and apologized to my 'usband and 'is family for this houtrage.

FATHER ANTHONY:

(*His face grooved with agony.*) Your HUSBAND! There *is* some mistake!

MRS. WAMPUS:

I should say there is, some mistake.

FATHER ANTHONY:

I beg of you—let me explain.

MRS. WAMPUS:

Girls, go indoors. 'Ow many more times must I tell you? (*They retire unwillingly from so piquant a situation. Mrs. Wampus and Father Anthony take the vacant chairs by Mr. Wampus.*)

FATHER ANTHONY:

(*Clearing his throat to gain time—the matter needs careful wording.*) You see, my friends, this house has been for a considerable period—under —er—er—er—er . . .

[*The curtain is lowered with the utmost rapidity.*]

ARACHNE

By Alice King

HE was not happy with his wife. The women he met tried to console him. "It is *so* difficult to live with one who does not understand," they would say; or, "The woman who would not appreciate *you*—" ending the sentence with an eloquent silence.

These and similar words were balm to his heart and vanity. More—they helped to prevent an open break with his wife. It was easier to regard her stupidity with pity, her nagging with lenience, when he knew that there were other women who appreciated him—even entertained for him sentiments of more than mere appreciation. This last thought cheered him most of all. To believe that hearts were broken for his sake was an inspiration. For his part, no woman could sufficiently pierce his self-interest to arouse him to the romantic possibilities of a situation. The most he could feel for his consolers was a tender pity, not unmixed with contempt.

Then he met a woman. He met her quite casually at a reception to which his wife was unasked. He thought the woman neither beautiful nor charming. She had an almost provincially tactful manner. The conversation, of course, was soon steered to his unfortunate domestic experience. The usual consolation, however, was not forthcoming.

"So often," she said gently, "what is mistaken for lack of appreciation is only reserve." And, again, "A woman sometimes seems sharp when she is merely tired or troubled."

But it was these words which rang in his ears as he drove home: "You know, I believe in marriage—in its sanctity, I mean."

What an extraordinary statement for a woman to make, quite casually, to a married man! What could she have meant by it?

He had no tolerance for his wife that evening. She frankly annoyed him.

The next day the words of the woman who had not pitied him kept returning to his mind. "The sanctity of marriage." They followed him home. He could hear their reiteration through his wife's tirade at his lateness for dinner. When, after a short outburst of temper, he went upstairs, he could see them on the panels of his bedroom door.

He sat idle for a few moments, then drew a note-book from an inner pocket, and ran through its pages, pausing at a recent entry. Then he reached for the telephone. "What did she mean by it?" he muttered. "Such a curious—"

The woman smiled as she took down the receiver. "Certainly, I shall be at home this evening," she told the 'phone. "Tell the boy you may come right up."

She replaced the receiver and went into the dining-room of the apartment. On the table was a tray, with a plate of little cakes, a bottle, and two tiny iridescent glasses. She carried the tray into the other room, and set it on a little stand by the fireplace. She placed two chairs beside the table, then stood off, her head tilted to one side, to regard the arrangement. The whole effect was distinctly *a deux*.

Satisfied, she seated herself in one of the chairs, and gazed into the fire. The light flickered and gleamed, bringing into clear relief the only ornament she wore—a curious locket in the form of a spider, suspended about her neck by a slender thread of gold.

LORDS AND MASTERS

By Oscar Graeve

I

ONCE a month, at the least, John Merck made a trip to New York for the purpose, so he told everyone, of buying supplies for the mine. He was manager of a mine in that district around Scranton which is the prey of the coal industry; where the fair countryside has been torn and tunneled, ravished and bled for the sake of the coal lying beneath it. There every green thing struggles against a mantel of grey coal dust; there every man bears the marks of coal on his hands and in his face; and there a hundred thousand tall stacks belch forth clouds of smoke which shut out the sky by day and the stars by night.

An electric line runs from Penticote to Scranton—a quivering, oscillating little line with narrow cars in which the seats are bare and begrimed; but at Scranton John Merck was able to transfer his large bulk to the upholstered luxury of a Pullman—and in that paradise of red plush chairs and plate-glass windows he uttered a sigh of deepest content. The obsequious porter placed his bag beside his chair and into this chair John Merck fell, his head thrown back, his legs stretched afar.

As the train pulled slowly out of the station the sound of the wheels was music to his ears, and he began to play with the thought of New York. The sparkling atmosphere, the hotel lobbies filled with well-dressed men and modish women, the cafés with their orange-colored lights and onyx pillars: his mind dwelt on them lovingly. And the exultant sense of relief rose within him that for a little while, at least, he was free of the squalid mining town in which he lived, where his own home placed high on a hill was the only house that laid claim to space and light and cleanliness.

In the midst of these reflections a hearty hand was slapped upon his knee.

"Hello, John," said Sam Ashe. "So you're off for the big town, too. I'm in the next car with Jim Strong and Chum Kirkpatrick. Come along with me. We need a fourth for bridge."

John Merck rose gladly and preceded the other, lurching from side to side with the swaying of the train. As he walked he nodded to acquaintances right and left. The car was filled with business men he knew. There was Walter Phipps, the broker; there, George Parkinson, the real estate dealer; there, fat, round little Jacob Abramson with bulging eyes, who owned the biggest department store in Scranton. "How's the boy?"—"How's business?"—"Looking pretty good, John,"—rang out on either side. For John Merck's generous girth, his fresh pink complexion, which coal dust couldn't vanquish, his air of jovial importance, made him popular and made men glad to greet him.

Besides, every man was in happy mood, every face glowed, and every man's eyes seemed to hold a furtive and joyous secret which all the others shared. For despite their sleek clothes, their large prosperity, their thinning hair and thickening bodies there was something about this assemblage of business men that suggested a crowd of schoolboys playing truant.

"How's the missus?" asked Sam Ashe, his hand upon the other's shoulder as they passed from one car to another.

"Fine and dandy, Sam."

"A mighty nice little woman, John."

"You bet! As good as they come, I guess."

"Don't you take her to New York with you any more?"

"I ain't taken her for five years. She likes best to sit at home. Mrs. M. is a regular homebody and I'm thankful for it."

"Sure, that's what a woman ought to be. Now, my old lady, she's different. She wants to be going out all the time. I had a hard time getting away from her this trip—had to give her a new hat to square myself." Sam Ashe dropped a purplish eyelid over a bulbous eye. "Had a little party fixed up in New York where the old lady wouldn't fit in at all, at all."

John Merck nodded approval. "A man's got to get off by himself once in a while—got to have some liberty. Women are different. They're made to stay at home."

"How's that pretty daughter of yours?"

"Ethel? Oh, she's well enough," answered Merck, but a cloud settled for a moment over his geniality. Ethel had been worrying him lately with her foolish desire to leave Penticote, to earn her own living—as if he, her father, didn't have enough to give her anything she wanted—within reason.

In the next car the two men were greeted by Strong and Kirkpatrick, who had bribed the porter to set up a table in the unoccupied drawing-room. The four men settled down each in his place regarding eagerly the bits of pasteboard which Ashe dealt out to them. Kirkpatrick touched the electric bell near him and ordered mineral water and ice.

"It's too bad we can't have a real drink," said Merck.

"Oh, I'll fix that!" laughed Kirkpatrick, and he drew a leather-bound flask from his hip-pocket.

The porter, feed into abject slavery, closed the door upon them; each man lighted a black cigar and the drawing-room filled with smoke.

The train had now left the coal fields far behind. Outside the window the air was translucent. It shimmered over a little green valley to whose bosom was clasped a tiny village; from out a clump of trees a white spire pointed straight to heaven. In back of the farthest hill the sun was setting; loath to go, it poured its softest light and most caressing colors over the valley as if it were a lover called away from his beloved. Gossamer of rose and lavender was drawn across the valley's bosom. Inside the parlor car, at a window, a child gazed and wondered and felt its small soul expand with inexpressible rapture. A woman whispered, "How lovely!"

But the four men closed within the drawing-room saw nothing but the bits of pasteboard which they held before their faces. Occasionally one of them laughed; occasionally one of them swore. And continuously the tinkling glasses filled with a sparkling amber fluid were lifted to lips parched with tobacco and tense with interest in the game. . . .

II

Down a short flight of marble steps one descended into the Pompeiian Room of the great hotel. The room was a sea of square white tables to which people clung like swimmers to rafts. But the gilt chairs were so arranged that the diners could turn their faces when they wished to the stage at one side of the room where a dozen girls followed a youth in a dexterous dance. Over and over he sang, "Do you love me?" and over and over they answered, "Yes, we love you dearly—you!—and you!—and you!" But at the "you!—and you!—and you!" they turned from the agile youth and leaned far over the edge of the stage, their lips pouting, their arms held forth invitingly, singling out a fat, bald-headed man here or a college boy there.

And one of the girls, the most daring of the lot, descended a short flight of steps at the right of the stage and, wriggling her way to where Merck sat, put her arms around his burly neck and sang loudly, "I love you dearly—you! —and you!—and you!" The song ended in a crash of chords, the agile youth leaped high into the air, the girls in their scanty, chiffony skirts fled shrieking like a flock of large, white birds and the diners applauded loudly.

John Merck turned to the young man who sat beside him—a young man who picked at his salad and drank his champagne with a tired and indifferent air.

"You certainly know how to give a fellow a good time, Scott," he said admiringly. And he slapped the young man on the back and gazed at him affectionately.

"I know the old town pretty well," said the young fellow complacently. "That's part of my business. When a fellow like you comes to town I know he wants to go where the lights burn brightest."

"You bet!" cried Merck. "Why, I get so sick of seeing coal and nothing but coal, that I'd go crazy if I didn't come to New York once in a while for a little relaxation."

"Right-o! We Americans work so hard we have to break away from business once in a while."

"Speaking of business, Scott, I think I'll give you that order for six pumps. Let's see, how much did you say those centrifugals would cost and what's the discount for cash?"

The young man emerged abruptly from his lassitude. His eyes snapped; his words were crisp, the muscles in his jaw tightened. He leaned forward pencil in hand, and illustrating his remarks with figures drawn on the tablecloth, he talked fluently of the value of Kenny Pumps, of their capacity and the long service they give, of how strongly they are guaranteed and of the big mines which were already using them.

Merck, his thumbs stuck in the armholes of his waistcoat, listened with a tolerant smile. He had decided the day before to give the young man the order; he was a shrewd buyer and he knew the pumps were efficient and the prices right, but—a salesman lost interest in a buyer after the order was signed, and he was in New York to have a good time at as little expense to himself as possible.

The young man concluded his passionate assertions and hungrily thrust an order blank before Merck.

"Will you sign it, old man?" he entreated.

But the lights in the Pompeiian Room were suddenly dimmed and the flock of girls pulsated back upon the stage. Their arms and bosoms were now quite bare and they wore pantalettes of chiffon, which gave them a strangely exotic, strangely alluring appearance. Thoughts of Eastern harems and of the delights of those harems stirred about. Placing their hands upon the shoulders before them, the girls cavorted in a line up and down the stage; at a given moment their little red-slippered feet kicked out in unison while the spot-light played upon them, turning their flesh from dead-white to red, from red to green.

"There's the one I like!" whispered Merck, his lips close to the other's ear. "The third one from the end. Poor girl! She looks too nice to be in that crowd."

"Yes, she's the best of the bunch," agreed the young man wearily.

"I hate to see a girl like her in a place like this," sighed Merck, shaking his head, and his huge body wilted, soft with sympathy and sentiment. "Of course, the others don't matter. They look used to it. But that girl is different."

The young man eyed him speculatively. "You're a married man, aren't you?" he asked.

"Sure, been married twenty years. Got as good a wife as any man. God, when you think of your own womenfolks and then those poor things up there—well, I don't sort o' like to think

of them at one and the same time."

He considered telling the young man, too, of Ethel, his daughter. The idea of singing her praises, her youth and beauty and saintliness was almost irresistible. But he thought that while young Scott was a good fellow, a man's man and all that, he wasn't the kind of fellow to whom one talked about one's daughter.

The entire line of girls was now descending the steps from the stage. Round and about, in and out of the tables they danced, singing, laughing, evading as best they could men's hands which reached out to stroke their bare arms. The third girl from the end was swept close to Merck, and he, intoxicated by her proximity, stretched out his hand too and said, "Come here, you sweet little thing."

But she only smiled at him and danced on.

Even after the girls had disappeared and the lights were flashed full upon the diners, Merck could not get the thought of her out of his mind. He pounded the table with his fist.

"Do you know what I'd do if I had money enough, Scott?" he boomed. "I'd take that little girl out of here and give her a good education and learn her how to support herself in a decent way."

The young man smiled agreeably. "You'd have a swell time doing it. Imagine Betsy giving up this for a schoolroom."

"Is her name Betsy? Do you know her?"

"Certainly I know her. That's part of my business, too."

"What's she like?"

"She's a country girl, came from a God-forsaken farm somewhere, and she told me the other night she'd rather have a year of this than a hundred years on that farm where there was nothing to see, nothing to do from one year to another."

"Then she ain't any different from the rest of 'em?"

"Not a bit—except better looking."

John Merck drained his glass of wine. Sentiment gave way to disgust.

"God, you can't put any faith in any of 'em," he remarked.

He sat there heavily, pondering; and then into his eyes crept a furtive look. "If you know her—well, could you introduce me to her?" he asked finally.

"You sign that order and I'll introduce you."

The young man again pushed the order blank before him. He handed him a fountain pen, and John Merck, stooping clumsily over the small white table, scrawled his name eagerly. . . .

III

JOHN MERCK had intended to stay a full week in New York. He told himself that he was entitled to a full week. Heaven knows, working from seven-thirty in the morning till six at night in the dingy, pine-board office at the mine earned a man whatever recreation he could snatch from the treadmill! But a telegram called him back to Penticote. The miners had cooked up a new grievance; they wanted to be paid for everything they dug whether it was good coal or refuse, and meanwhile, the command of the operators—"Get the coal out!"—was more insistent than ever. Europe was buying, South America was buying, and everywhere throughout the United States manufacturing plants were running full force night and day. Not in a long while had the coal fields been so prosperous, nor had prices been so good, and now the miners had brewed among themselves this new excuse for demanding more money.

So Merck left Thursday afternoon instead of Saturday afternoon, as he had planned. It was eight o'clock at night when he alighted from the rickety little electric line at Penticote. There was a jitney standing at the station which he hired to take him up the hill to his home.

As the automobile crawled upward past shabby stores whose windows were crowded with a jumble of articles, past saloons where the miners congregated

and muttered, past the small Lithuanian church, closed and silent, Merck lay back in the rear seat of the jitney with supreme satisfaction.

Now that he was home he did not mind so much the fact that he had been cheated out of two days' pleasure. He was flooded with a sense of satiety; he was weary with a weariness that was pleasant. He experienced the peace of a man who has spent himself and been amply rewarded for the spending. But as he neared the hilltop where his house sat, he regretfully dismissed the memories which clung to his brain as the fumes of wine linger in a glass after it has been emptied.

He set his mouth sternly and with no sense of humor he began to fabricate the lies he would tell his wife concerning his stay in New York, of his incessant toil, so incessant it kept him from writing her, so incessant he had been glad to tumble into bed each night at nine or half-after.

At home he had to play a part that made these lies necessary; it never occurred to him that the part was ridiculous and a sham. At home, he was lord and master, just as nearly all the men he knew were lords and masters; it was part of his duty as a man to maintain his sex's tradition.

His wife greeted him with a cry of surprise. "Why, I thought you weren't coming home till Saturday, John?"

He kissed her with gruff affection, his arm clasped around her soft fat back. "Ain't you glad to see me, Bess?"

"Of course I'm glad to see you, but why didn't you let me know?"

"I got called back suddenly," and he explained the new demands of the miners. "Damn 'em!" he interjected frequently.

"Had your supper, John?"

"I had a bite on the train."

"Well, let me get you a little something. You must be hungry after your trip. I've got some cold veal chops that are lovely and tender, and I'll give you some of Aunt Martha's pickalilly with them."

He nodded a gracious acquiescence.

She fluttered around him, in and out of the kitchen, happy to serve. Her worn brown silk dress was drawn tightly over her too ample bosom and her hair, which had once been as brown as a chestnut, was now a homely mixture of grey and faded brown. As she ran around it became disheveled and hung in ugly little strands over her meek, placid, round face.

John Merck could eat night or day and he attacked the veal chops with gusto. But suddenly midway between mouthfuls his fork, with its burden suspended between plate and lip, he asked, "Where's Ethel? Gone to bed already?"

"Oh, no, she's just gone out for a little while," his wife replied, and she smoothed her brown silk dress and attempted in an ecstasy of smiling to show him that Ethel was all right.

But Merck was not to be put off.

"Where's she gone, Bess?"

"She'll be back soon. She said she'd be in by ten."

"Why don't you answer a plain question? What's up, anyway? *Where's she gone?*"

"She went to spend the evening at River Park."

Merck threw his napkin away from him. "River Park! Didn't I tell you never to let her go there? Didn't I tell you the riffraff that goes there? It ain't fit for a decent girl. It's a place where they sit around under trees and then between drinks they go in and dance. Didn't I tell you that?"

"Ethel gets so little pleasure," his wife rejoined quietly. "There's nothing to do in Penticote—not even a movie—and she can't go to Scranton alone to see her girl friends."

"She's got a good home to stay in at night, hasn't she?" Merck exclaimed—and then a new thought struck him; he leaned forward, his face hot with suspicion. "Did that Watson fellow take her?"

"I—I don't know."

"You do know. Don't lie, Bess. You

can't get away with anything like that."

"Yes, he did take her."

"My God, after I warned you! I told you what he was. I told you about that Pitkin girl. And now, as soon as my back's turned, you let our Ethel go out with a fellow like that."

"Who else has she got to go out with, John?"

He gazed at his wife in open-mouthed stupefaction. Never before had he heard her answer him like that. What had come over her? His fist thundered down upon the table.

"You go to bed, Bess!" he cried. "I'll wait for that girl. I'm going to have a talk with her. I don't want you around to make it easy for her. You go to bed and I'll deal with her."

Again his wife astonished him—left him gaping. "Oh, Ethel can take care of herself," she said quietly. "I'm not worried about Ethel. I'm worried about myself. Ethel's crazy to go away and make her living. She's got almost two hundred dollars saved up and she's just waiting for an excuse to go. But you listen here, John Merck, if you say anything to-night that drives her away from me, I'm going to leave, too. I've been a good wife to you for twenty years. I've suffered and bled without saying anything, because I thought maybe that was what a wife was for—that's all I've ever seen wives doing. But Ethel's young and she's seen something else. She's got me to thinking maybe I've been a fool all these years. You've got your business and your trips to New York and everything, but all I've got is Ethel, and if she goes I might as well be dead for all I care about living on here without her. Sit here and wait for Ethel if you want to, but you remember all I said when you come to talk to her."

She turned at that and left him, a curious and pathetic dignity in her amble, in the back of her dress drawn so taut that the line of the bulging corsets showed, in the grey and brown hair that fell in unsightly strands down her fat neck.

IV

So Merck sat alone at last in the dining-room in his house perched far away up upon a high hillside.

He was dumbfounded.

It was not given him to understand that the echoes of a revolt which was passing around the world had at last penetrated within the walls of his distant fortress. The centuries-old reign of the lords and masters was threatened—but he did not know that.

With an oath he pushed the cold veal chops farther away from him.

He pulled forth a cigar, lighted it, puffed at it jerkily till ashes fell all over his coat and waistcoat.

The shade of the window was up and below in the valley he could see the chimneys belch forth occasionally a shower of sparks red against the inky sky—and as he gazed he thought pityingly of himself.

According to his standard, he had always been a good husband and a good father—and now both wife and daughter had turned upon him. Here he had returned from an arduous business trip to confront a host of new complexities at the mine, and in his own home, where peace and comfort should have greeted him, he had found insurrection. . . .

Presently, he didn't exactly know why, he discovered himself thinking of the girl in the Pompeiian Room—the third girl from the end. What was her name? Yes, Betsy! He thought of Betsy and of her story about escaping from a God-forsaken farm. And he thought of Ethel. To his horror, repugnant as it was to him, he thought of Ethel and of Betsy in the same flash of his brain. Ethel and Betsy irretrievably tangled themselves up in his thoughts. Betsy bowing in Ethel's place and Ethel smiling in Betsy's . . . and Ethel had two hundred dollars saved up with which to go away. If only he knew where she had secreted that two hundred dollars!

So he sat for an hour—for two hours.

The black marble clock on the mantel chimed twelve.

Presently the sound of an automobile outside—chug! chug! whirr! the grinding of brakes!

Then silence.

Then whispering.

Then the click of a key in the lock. (Bess had given the girl the key, too!)

Finally, a soft footfall in the hall.

Attracted by the light in the dining-room, the girl fluttered in. She stood there in the doorway, a slim, graceful figure—and when her eyes hardened to the light she saw her father.

"Oh, it's—you!" she said, with a sort of breathless gasp.

"A nice time to get home," he growled, glowering at her.

She smiled; she stepped unhesitatingly within the doorway. John Merck, with a sinking of the heart, realized she was no more afraid of her father than if he were a stranger. But perhaps she did know he knew where she had been and with whom.

"Where've you been?" he asked.

"To River Park."

"Who took you?"

"Jack Watson."

"Don't you know I've forbidden you to go there?"

She nodded quietly and took another step forward, and now John Merck realized that she was eager for his challenge; it was as if she bared her bosom to him and invited him to strike. And he could not strike! He thought of the girl in the Pompeiian Room. He thought of the two hundred dollars.

He let his heavy chin fall upon his chest. And presently when he looked up it was to say, "Well, it's getting late, Ethel. I guess we'd better go to bed."

CHAINS

By Helen Woljeska

THE gray trees trace delicate lace work against a paler gray sky. The distance is yet another gray, with dolorous browns and dreamy blues added. And the dead meadow in the foreground stretches desolately its drab dullness. The subtle enchantment, the piercing joy, to paint what I see and feel! But, oh—All my days and half of my nights belong to the deadening routine of commercial drawing . . . . God! Why was I not born idle and rich?

The gray trees trace delicate lace work against a paler gray sky. The distance is yet another gray, with dolorous browns and dreamy blues added. And the dead meadow in the foreground stretches desolately its drab dullness. The subtle enchantment, the piercing joy, to paint what I see and feel! But, oh—All my days and half of my nights belong to the deadening routine of society . . . . God! Why was I not born a poor artist?

WHEN you think of it, war is only a practical application of the motto: "Eventually, why not now?"

SOMETHING NEW

By Ralph Brodie

SHE was not particularly pretty, nor yet unattractive. Indeed, there was a distinctive quality to her features that the man termed individual. He preferred individuality, not for the sake of contrast, but because, to him, it stood for progress.

She was so different from other women. There was no affectation in her manner, no prudishness. Her speech was always direct and sincere; enthusiastic without being effusive. Her actions were spontaneous, almost abandoned, and never incomprehensible. Even in her attire did individuality assert itself. But it was her ability to conceive—her philosophic penetration into thought that, above all else, interested the man. Here was a woman capable of taking a broad attitude toward life and living; one with a tolerance for the frailty of her sex, yet with a fine disdain for their one object—marriage. They held many profound conversations together. It was the man's first experience in speaking freely and without compunction of his opinions to a woman. She was an intelligent and interested listener, and all subjects led, with amazing precision, to a common understanding.

Did I mention that the man was original? Well, he was. As time progressed he became more so, yet the woman never lagged behind. They dispensed with the accepted code of propriety; they defied convention. Their aloofness from the commonplace was supreme; their interest in one thing was inextinguishable, and their goal was the Undiscovered. It led them through the open country, with the rain beating in their faces, and into dim corners of the city, where they met strange people and saw strange sights. They enjoyed it. Time never dragged.

One morning, some six months after their first meeting, the woman was awakened by the ringing of the telephone bell. The hour was very early, about four o'clock. It was the man. He had had the greatest inspiration ever conceived. No; he could not explain it over the 'phone, it was too important. He would come up immediately.

She observed, on admitting him a little later, that his face was drawn, his body tense and agitated. Evidently he had not slept that night. As he paced back and forth across the floor he seemed to be revolving some stupendous problem in his mind, and striving for words to express it adequately. The woman waited patiently. She had great faith in his opinions, and saw wonderful possibilities in his ideas.

With a supreme effort the man controlled himself, and when he spoke his voice was calm. He reviewed, in minute detail, their past adventures,—ah! how he believed in them; how responsive and understanding she had been! He spoke vaguely of the explorations into the Unknown that were to be, then suddenly switched back to the mysterious subject of the moment. It was something entirely new, he said; a departure from the expected, and something neither of them had ever dreamed of; an accomplishment, in fact, that no one could ever achieve so successfully as they.

Then, after a long and portentous pause, with no intimation of what was to come, he asked her to marry him.

THE CONQUEROR

By Hugh Kahler

A SMALL motor, driven by an undersized man of some five and thirty years, at whose side sat a tall, strikingly handsome woman, paused at the crossing in obedience to the traffic-officer's upraised hand, just as Arthur Garrison arrived at the kerb on his way to the other—and shadier—side of the Avenue. His careless glance, meeting the woman's dark, direct gaze, lingered for a long moment, held by her rather assertive beauty, before passing to the man at her side. It was only after this brief ocular duel with the woman that Garrison became aware of the fact that the driver of the car was Jim Lockwood, quondam acquaintance of his, whom he had not seen since the latter's marriage to a girl quite unknown in the leisured circle to which both men belonged. He grinned an affable recognition, lifting his hat with a faint touch of the theatrical in the flourish, and passed on, perfectly conscious of the fact that the woman's eyes followed him.

His first mental attitude was one of half-amused condescension. A freebooter in the warfare of sex, a daring rover who held letters of marque and reprisal and owned no allegiance to any cause higher than his own impulse, he entertained toward the men who fell into matrimonial ambuscades something of the same supercilious contempt which the successful burglar feels for the smug and plodding householder. The mere fact that a man was married proved, in Garrison's estimate, that he was weak-spirited; marriage, to his view, was essentially the compromise by which a spineless individual accomplished his wish for the favor of a lady at the price of his own independence, his liberty, his future. It stamped the man at once as a pitiful weakling. He, after almost fifteen years of joyous experience with feminine approval, was still foot-loose, wholly untrammeled by even the vague bonds of *noblesse oblige* which arise from unsanctified romance to entrap the unwary Lothario.

Without having deprived himself in the least degree of the society—using the word in the strongest sense of which it is capable—of the women of his own world, Garrison had avoided the degrading handcuffs of matrimony and the subtler gyves of obligation, alike. More: he had escaped even a hint of the repute which often falls to such men as he; he had no reputation as a breaker of hearts and homes, even among the companions who were favored by his confidences. And the ease with which he had accomplished this inspired him with a lively contempt for the men who paid for a lady's smile in terms of either matrimony or money.

He had devised an excellent system very early in his career. In the first place he sedulously avoided wistful maidens—not only because they presented difficulties out of all proportion to their ultimate value to him, but also because their unmarried estate afforded him none of the safety which he shrewdly desired. An affair with a girl might easily end in a situation from which he could extricate himself only at the price of marriage. He steered his course carefully clear of such perils and devoted himself exclusively to young, personable matrons—women who had emerged from the first

infatuation of the honeymoon and were beginning to realize that their erstwhile idols were sadly clay-footed, but who were still far from the dangerous state of mind in which divorce assumes the aspect of a blissful escape. He found these women, still under the spell of their recent enlightenment in matters of sex, far more entertaining than inexperienced and unattached damsels; he found them vastly more susceptible to approach, when adroitly managed, and prevented, by the very exigencies of the situation, from demanding the preliminary attentions which would have been inevitable had he laid his siege upon unmarried girls of his own world.

Further, it was absurdly easy to terminate these romances when they had begun to pall upon his variable nature. An affair with a girl, with a divorcée, with one of the semi-disguised daughters of joy who abound along the fringes of polite society, would have involved an annoying amount of hysterical and trying debate when the moment of separation arrived. With a suitably wedded inamorata the avenue of escape was wide and easy, and afforded him an egress with all the honors of war—enabled him to leave behind him an awed respect for his chivalry instead of a flaming hate for his faithlessness. He would suddenly discover a conscience, point out to the lady the grievous wrong of which they were jointly guilty, refer in feeling terms to the unsuspicious husband; he would proceed to paint, in lurid colors, the inevitable consequences of discovery—a broken life for the husband, a hateful scandal for the lady herself.

It was this note on which he played most skilfully. He could never bear the thought of exposing his beloved to the covert scorn of a censorious society—never consent to drag her adored innocence through the slime of the divorce-courts, upon which subject he entertained the most ultra-conservative views. He would crucify his own desires and his abiding passion rather than bring down upon her devoted head the penalty which society exacts from those who offend its prim canons of conventionality. It was an essentially sympathetic rôle for a man with dark, expressive eyes, a fine, deep, mellifluous voice, a mobile countenance framed for the tragic, and Garrison played it to perfection. Invariably he parted from the lady with her awed admiration for his nobility of soul enwrapping him like a garment; invariably he left her to atone, in her own fashion, to the unconscious husband, as her share in the punishment.

Too, there was a gratifying finality in these separations. Since they had proven their inability to be nothing more than friends, since they had already demonstrated their weakness in the face of overpowering emotion, the only safety lay—he would point out—in sedulous avoidance of one another. Henceforth they must meet only in company—only as casual acquaintances; they could not afford to trust themselves.

This, incidentally, gave him occasion for more oratorical fireworks on the theme of the future. She would observe, he prophesied, that now and again he would seem to be interested in some Other Woman; she was to remember, if that eventuality should transpire, that it was only his endeavor to deceive the eyes of the world as to the true state of his emotions; he would never marry. Perpetual celibacy was the one tribute he might offer her. She could be quite sure of that.

Garrison had just come from an interview of this description, marking the end of his entertaining little romance with Laura Fane. It had been unusually affecting, but thoroughly successful. Laura stood committed to a lifetime of reparation to the wholly unsuspicious Fane; Garrison to a lifelong expiation of his mad, bad behavior through the medium of repression and exile from Laura's beloved smiles. For the moment, therefore, his fancies were disengaged. And, as Jimmy Lockwood's absurd little motor passed him, his first glimpse of Jimmy Lock-

wood's strikingly spectacular wife furnished him with a welcome hint as to his next objective. In the instant in which their glances had clashed he reached his decision; mentally he marked a cross beside the name of Myra Lockwood, and resolved to look up Jimmy as soon as might be.

He always preferred to make his first appearance under the friendly auspices of the husband. It not only disarmed suspicions in advance, but afforded an admirable argument, at the denouement, for magnanimous withdrawal. "Why, dearest," he would exclaim, in sonorously self-reproachful tone, "it was Bill (or John or Percy, as the case might be) himself who brought me here that first time! I've betrayed his trust in me! I must justify it now, when it tears the very soul out of me to do it, by going away—forever. You see that, don't you?" It was effective, that speech. Blaming himself it subtly compelled the stricken lady to assume the same weight of treason, and, at the same time, accentuated beautifully the self-sacrificing nobility of Garrison himself.

II

Having fixed his intentions on the eye-filling Mrs. Jimmy as the next objective, it remained for Garrison to reestablish himself upon terms of intimacy with her innocent lord and master. And this proved unexpectedly difficult. For, since his marriage, Lockwood seemed to have lost his taste for the joys of club existence; he was not to be seen at the Patrons' or the Schuyler, or the University; the very waiters at the country clubs had forgotten him; no one seemed to know what had become of him. There was a vague idea that he lived in the country now—somewhere in Westchester, according to Martin Schuyn, who was popularly supposed to know everything about everybody who was anybody. Garrison rather enjoyed this preliminary check; a little initial difficulty always heightened the savor of the ultimate triumph for him. He meant to track Jimmy relentlessly to his hiding-place, to weave his serpentine course into that hidden Eden through Jimmy's own artless connivance. And it disappointed him a little when he ran into Lockwood in the smoking-room at the Patrons' Club on the afternoon after their chance encounter on the Avenue.

Lockwood was gloomily absorbing a glass of vichy and milk at a corner table. Garrison vaguely recalled that, in the old days, Jimmy's abhorrence of all such compromise beverages had been definite, emphatic and outspoken, but he gave little heed to the detail in his eagerness to forward more important matters. He clapped Jimmy jovially on his shoulder and hailed him as a long-lost brother. It pleased him to observe the satisfaction with which Lockwood greeted him. This was going to be easy—almost too easy!

"What have you done with yourself, you old scoundrel?" he demanded. "And why are you doing penance on milk and vichy? Here"—he touched the bell—"take that stuff away and bring us some of that Scotch of mine."

"No—I'm off the stuff, Garry. This is my limit, nowadays. I'm getting to like it—almost." Lockwood sipped in proof of the assertion, but it was a feeble attempt. Garrison surveyed him with almost patent scorn. To outrival a pitiable creature like this was scarcely sporting. He almost recanted, in that instant, but a memory of Mrs. Lockwood's dark, glowing eyes renewed his determination. He shrugged his shoulders and poured himself a generous drink from the squat, amber bottle set before him. As he tilted the soda-bottle above the tall glass he glanced at Lockwood, and the wistful expression he detected in the man's eyes increased his scorn.

"Here's to your good 'ealth and your family's good 'ealth," he quoted, lifting his glass. "May you live long and prosper!"

Lockwood grinned feebly in acknowledgment and dishonored the

toast by another gulp of his contemptible counterfeit.

"Speaking of your family," pursued Garrison, easily, "I thought I got a glimpse of you yesterday. If the lady with you was Mrs. Jimmy, I can understand why you've taken such precious good care to bury yourself out in the woods somewhere. Some people have unholy luck. I never could understand it."

Lockwood flushed consciously and grinned again. "Two is company, Garry. We live out in Marsdale—got a bully little place up there. Old colonial farmhouse, built like a bally fort —roses all over the shop—all the room on earth."

Garrison stared. His recollection of Jimmy Lockwood held nothing upon which to explain this fondness for the delights of suburbia; Jimmy had revealed no hint of a potential passion for rosegrowing. "I suppose you've gone in for Airedales," he hazarded, recalling Lockwood's quondam dreams of breeding innumerable blue-ribbon specimens of that exuberant tribe.

"No—I got over that; dogs are a nuisance about a place. We've gone in for cats, though—you ought to see our Persians—they're wonders, Garry. I tell you—come on out for dinner tonight and have a look at 'em."

Garrison almost laughed outright. "Will you walk into my parlor?" to the spider said the fly! He had been prepared to angle skilfully for that invitation; to have secured it within a week would have delighted him. And here he had it without even a hint—an invitation that was almost an entreaty. He laughed deprecatingly. "Oh, I couldn't think of intruding on your little corner of Heaven, Jim—Mrs. Lockwood wouldn't want your dissolute bachelor pals butting in, I'm sure."

"She'd be crazy to have you," persisted Lockwood. "I'll 'phone her right here. You listen."

A waiter fetched a portable telephone and plugged its connection with a wall socket—they are highly modern at the Patrons'—and Lockwood, after some argument with central, achieved the miracle of a clear wire to Marsdale.

"This is Jim, darling—sure, I attended to it—yes, I remembered to—yes, I'm starting right now—I say, I'm bringing Garrison out with me for dinner—yes, you do—we passed him yesterday, on the Avenue—all right—yes, —seven thirty, sharp."

He replaced the receiver and glanced triumphantly at Garrison. "She's pleased as Punch," he declared. "We don't entertain much—not enough, I'm afraid. It's a bit lonesome for her, I guess. You'll be a godsend, old top. Come along—it's quite a spin out—I've got the car outside."

"I ought to change first," Garrison objected, with a glance at his beautifully correct afternoon costume—he was something of a classicist in clothes —but Lockwood overruled him eagerly.

"Not a bit of it—we don't bother about dressing for dinner," he declared. "Country life—informal stuff, you know. Come as you are." And, Garrison nothing loath to waive the point, he had his way. They drove northward along the Avenue, thronged with the traffic of late afternoon, and Garrison observed that the car demanded Lockwood's entire attention; it seemed as though he was perpetually shifting gears, applying brakes, manipulating the wheel. Remembering the man's ancient hatred for anything smacking of mechanics, Garrison was puzzled at the phenomenon of his driving his own car. It could not be economy that deprived him of a chauffeur; the car forbade that hypothesis. It was an imported affair, hideously costly, Garrison knew. A chance phrase of Lockwood's explained the mystery as they reached the relatively unfrequented reaches north of Fifty-ninth street.

"Infernal nuisance, driving myself," he vouchsafed. "But a chauffeur's in the way, you know. 'Two's company.'" He grinned, shamefacedly, Garrison understood. Jealous! Distrustful of even a mechanic! He shook with inward mirth. This was going to be very much worth while!

III

THEY left the city behind, running smoothly over pleasant highways through a smiling country-side, more and more sylvan as they slipped past outlying suburbs. At last, dodging about the twists and turns of a tortuous lane shadowed by tall trees whose branches interlaced overhead, giving the effect, almost, of a tunnel hollowed out of a forest, they breasted a long, steep ascent and bowled along a gravelled drive to a pleasant-looking, massively built homestead, mellow with years, and set in the midst of a riotous medley of roses. Urban to his fingertips, Garrison did not respond to the charm of the place until a woman, tall, splendidly dark, rose from one of the wicker chairs of the verandah and crossed the wide porch to greet the coming guest. An enormous cat, tinted a curious, smoky blue, stalked majestically at her side; from a corner of his eye Garrison observed two more, luxuriously relaxed on the cretonne cushions of the chairs. He loathed cats, particularly the languid, exotic breeds which have replaced the one-time useful rat-catchers of our cruder days, but, as he gazed into Myra Lockwood's eyes, it seemed to him admirably suitable that she should be surrounded with them.

In a chastely severe afternoon dress utterly free of the meretricious note of the modern modes, against a background of rustic simplicity, she seemed the most utterly sensual creature of his experience. The calm of her face and voice and gesture, the restraint, amounting almost to coldness, with which she greeted Lockwood, the level, emotionless scrutiny with which she surveyed her guest as their hands touched in perfunctory clasp, all seemed to heighten the telepathic impression which Garrison sensed. Here was a woman worth waking and winning; here was a task which would test his mettle to its best; he felt her steady, unwavering gaze on him with a vague uneasiness; he could not interpret the meaning of that look. Was it possible that she saw through him, was forewarned? The thought stiffened his determination. The more difficult, the better! Laura Fane had put him out of humor with too-facile conquest.

The smoke-hued cat, after sniffing disdainfully at Garrison's spats, stalked away from him and, just as he was about to take the chair toward which the woman gestured, leaped to its cushion. "Hafiz is inclined to be selfish," said Mrs. Lockwood, indulgently. "Take him away, Jimmy."

Lockwood approached with an odd suggestion of caution which was not lost on the observant guest. It amused him, unreasonably, when Hafiz, hissing venomously, flashed one smoky paw in a lightning slash which left long, bleeding scratches along his master's wrist. He smiled at the abject Jimmy, bearing the squirming animal to another chair; this passion for cats was as futile as Jimmy himself. He turned to his hostess and wondered whether Lockwood were more successful as a fancier of womankind than as a devotee of cats. A certain instinctive resentment toward Lockwood for his possession of her came upon him; what right had Jimmy—insignificant, mousy little shrimp—to own such a magnificent thing—to stand between her and other, better men?

It was absurd, grotesque—this monopoly on the part of a weakling; Garrison felt almost righteous in his determination to apply his private Sherman Law to this unholy combination in restraint of nature. There were no cocktails to herald the dinner-hour, but Garrison, who had not missed his appetizer for ten years, was barely conscious of the omission; the dinner itself, dismayingly simple and rather badly served, failed to arouse his epicurean disapproval; he was scarcely aware that he was eating. The woman obsessed him, fascinated him with something akin to the coma of hypnosis. Outwardly she was ice; within, some confident instinct assured him, slumbered

the fires which, once adroitly fanned, would gloriously melt that Arctic armor.

After dinner, he produced his cigarette-case, mechanically, but Lockwood, with a queer, apologetic aspect of countenance, proffered an enormous briar pipe and a jar of damp, rum-scented tobacco. Garrison's dissent was checked unspoken by the woman's low-pitched, strangely imperious voice.

"Jimmy loathes cigarettes so," she informed him. "Wouldn't you like a pipe instead, Mr. Garrison? Jimmy is really absurd about his special mixture."

Garrison found himself clumsily crowding the soggy, evil-smelling stuff into the bowl. They went out to the porch and, after vainly applying a dozen matches, he permitted the pipe to remain mercifully dead. Indeed, he was scarcely conscious that he had missed his sacred after-dinner Egyptian. His mind was too intent upon Myra Lockwood to trouble itself with lesser concerns.

It would have been humiliating for him to reveal the sudden numbness of his normally agile tongue, had not the woman's low-pitched voice spared him the necessity of speech. The music of the full, deep tones charmed him so that he scarcely heeded the words, but, as she chatted on, disconnectedly, he began to gather an impression from her random revelations—to realize the amazing degree to which Jimmy Lockwood had been able to fascinate her. For his sake, it appeared, she had foregone the accustomed delights of urban existence and gladly buried herself alive in this out-of-the-way retreat; to gratify Jimmy she had abandoned her passion for dogs and substituted the Persian cats; to please her stern domestic despot she had consented to dispense with limousines and chauffeurs and submit to the discomforts of single-seated runabouts; Jimmy couldn't endure chauffeurs, it seemed. Because alcohol in all its works and ways was abhorrent to Lockwood, she had learned to get along without it.

Lockwood, swelling visibly as these evidences of his fascinations were detailed to his guest, contributed but little to the narration, and spoke only when his wife appealed to him for confirmation. On these occasions he would remove the pipestem from between his teeth, smile fatuously, and utter, in sickeningly self-complacent tones which inspired a murderous hatred in Garrison's spirit, such scintillating speeches as "Yes, dearest," or "No, indeed, Sweetheart."

As the evening wore on Garrison found himself hating Jimmy Lockwood fervently as an utterly selfish, inconsiderate brute, who had immolated a glorious woman on the altar of his stupid fads and prejudices. The idea of opening Myra Lockwood's eyes to the facts swiftly assumed an aspect of benevolent, unselfish service—almost a duty, indeed. Such a woman, buried out here in the country, wasting her sweetness on the desert air, was a crying offense against all justice, all right; such a woman, abjectly stifling every one of her normal instincts for the sake of the self-centred, complacent ass she had married, was a captive princess, prisoned in an ogre's castle, awaiting rescue at the hands of just such a valiant and chivalric knight as one Arthur Pilkington Garrison. And it should never be said of that gentle cavalier that such an appeal left him cold, unresponsive. He would waken her; enlighten her; put Lockwood in his place. It was an unusually agreeable task. A glow of conscious virtue suffused him at the thought of it.

He was to take the 10.08—the idea of a woman like Myra Lockwood living at the mercy of a train thus fractionally denominated!—back to New York, and Lockwood was to drive him to the station. As he said good night to the woman, Garrison permitted himself the poor consolation of a momentary pressure of fingers about her firm, cool hand.

"I may come again?" he asked, his voice persuasive. It enraged him that her glance flashed toward Lockwood,

that she hesitated before replying, that, when she spoke, it was to submit the weighty decision to her husband.

"If—Jimmy will bring you, I shall be glad," she said. "Good-night."

They drove to the station in tense silence, but Lockwood, as if vaguely ashamed of his acceptance of so many sacrifices, endeavored to make amends as they parted. "I wish you'd come up often, Garry," he said, ungracefully. "Sometimes I think Myra's too lonely—I know she'd enjoy having you and I fancy you'd be good for her."

Garrison promised readily, but, as he swung aboard the comfortless, crawling train, he vowed that his next visit would be timed to coincide with the absence of James Lockwood.

IV

It was providential, at least according to Garrison's view, that a distressing labor dispute at one of the far-western mines from which Jimmy Lockwood derived his revenues should demand that exigent husband's presence just as Mrs. Lockwood was beginning to manifest a reciprocal interest in the *tertium quid*. Lockwood's perpetual presence about the Marsdale farmhouse had prevented definite progress beyond a steady advance in the good graces of his wife; it is impossible for even the most adept of serpents to make headway with even a complaisant Eve unless the Adam in the case is good enough to absent himself at times. And this sudden summons to the West seemed like the direct intervention of a benevolent destiny. His contempt for Lockwood was intensified by the fellow's blind assurance when, at their last interview before his departure, he actually pressed Garrison to redeem the solitude of the bereft Myra as frequently as he could.

"I feel better about going, old top," he confided artlessly, "now that I know she won't be altogether alone while I'm away. Cheer her up, won't you?"

Garrison promised. A fool so utterly blind as Jimmy Lockwood deserved exactly what was about to happen to that sublimely idiotic husband. He felt no slightest twinge of reproachful conscience as Jimmy wrung his hand at parting, patently grateful for his obliging willingness to "cheer up" the temporarily widowed Myra. Never before had he felt so completely justified in his amiable intentions.

It annoyed him a little that even in the absence of her stern despot, Mrs. Lockwood held steadfastly to her obedience in the matter of amusement and even diet. She declined his urgent invitations to renew her acquaintance with the diversions of Manhattan on the dutiful ground that "Jimmy wouldn't like it"; on the same plea she gently insisted upon his pretending to smoke the unspeakable briar instead of his carefully blended cigarette; it served also to inhibit her acceptance of a gift of a dozen of wine, of a vintage so rare that the cellar-steward at the Patrons' all but genuflected as he bade the dusty bottles a last, reverent farewell. She petted the Persians faithfully in memory of the absent fancier, and, to avoid unpleasant argument on the topic, Garrison feigned a sudden interest in the bad-tempered, pampered brutes, at some expense in cuticle.

He had his reward for these sacrifices, to be sure. For beyond any question he made headway, now that Lockwood was out of the way. Absence makes the heart grow fonder chiefly in proverbs and the fiction which takes its cue from those wise-sounding lies; no one knew this truth more intimately than Garrison. His opportunity was always most easily grasped when the absence of the rightful occupant left a fond heart temporarily vacant.

Deprived of its wonted objective, Myra Lockwood's passion for self-sacrifice found vent in fashioning of Garrison's unwilling fibre a semblance of the far-away Jim; her insistence upon his emulation of Lockwood's objectionable likes and dislikes puzzled him until he realized that she was blindly endeavoring to remould him nearer to her heart's desire. Once illumined by this

understanding, he fell readily in with her efforts, depriving himself heroically of his wonted relaxations, daily crucifying the flesh in the matter of alcohol—he quickly learned that the faintest hint of its aroma displeased her by its unlikeness to the idealized Jim—and even learning, by dint of much persistence, to drive Lockwood's cars, since only so could he persuade her to accompany him on the idyllic excursions which foster intimacy so much more effectively than stationary philanderings.

It was almost a triumph when, after a hundred hairbreadth escapes, he succeeded in piloting the ugliest and most powerful car into the crowded heart of Manhattan. Myra—she permitted him now to address her thus, and returned the compliment in kind by calling him Arthur in a tone which invariably quickened his pulse—informed him, as they stopped at an evil-smelling bird-and-animal shop in lower Fifth Avenue, that his driving reminded her irresistibly of Jim's! And the compliment thrilled him so that he was almost reconciled to the purchase of a particularly spiteful and querulous Persian kitten as a surprise against Jim's homecoming, and only laughed when the beast clawed him villainously through the too-liberal mesh of its wicker prison. As they were about to reassume the undignified, semi-recumbent posture demanded by the absurdly low seats of the car, Myra halted, struck by a sudden thought. He found her studying his attire with a gaze that vaguely disquieted him.

"I couldn't understand what it was," she said, thrillingly. "I knew there was something out of harmony, but I never realized just what. It's your clothes, of course! Look at them!"

He inspected his image in the nearest show-window, fearing vague things, but the perfectly tailored afternoon dress, immaculate and unwrinkled even after the ordeal of driving the car, displayed nothing to justify her disapproval. He turned toward her, questioningly.

"You look like a fashion-plate," she declared. "You ought to have tweeds—lovely, rough, gorgeous tweeds, and a soft collar, and—oh, this is perfectly splendid! We'll have a regular spree getting you the right things!"

Garrison, who abhorred tweeds as a sartorial sin, to whom the slovenly expedient of a soft collar was loathsome, unclean, who affected a scrupulous nicety in the least minutiæ of attire, shuddered, would have cried out upon the horrible suggestion, but he caught himself in time. It was to complete his resemblance to Jim that she proposed the change; in a good cause a man might stoop to even lower things than a tweed suit and a shapeless, floppy, unstarched collar. He affected to share her enthusiasm, and endured, stoically unprotesting, the agony of watching her select, at his own tailor's, a pattern and weave which afflicted him with violent spiritual nausea; he permitted her to select for him a dozen scarves whose unspeakable dissonance of tint and shade were all but barbaric in their splendor; he suffered even the ignominy of having his taste in shirtings overruled in favor of the savage combinations affected by Jim Lockwood.

He was subdued as he drove the car northward once more; only the unmistakable lowering of Myra's barriers of reserve reconciled him to the prospect of those clothes. But by the time they had reached the rose-bowers of Marsdale he had recovered his spirits under the new warmth of her voice and her manner. He glanced at her, whenever he could risk taking his gaze from the road, to find her eyes fixed upon him in that strange, unfathomable scrutiny he had felt on the evening of their first meeting. But now it was subtly intensified, more personal, more direct; he found in it a vague, alluring hint of the reward for all his sacrifices.

He dined with her, again oblivious to the defects of her cook and the Spartan simplicity of her menu, basking intoxicated in the light of that peculiar, unwavering gaze. She was be-

ginning to wake at last, he told himself; she had already reached the stage in which she was less interested in him as a substitute for the absent husband than as a distinct individuality, was appraising him, weighing him, speculating about him. . . . He ventured upon cautious advances, as they sat on the verandah in the fading twilight; he spoke affectingly of his loneliness, of the colorless, vacant life of the bachelor, of the pang of envy which it cost him to behold, from afar off, the blissful estate of more fortunate men. He also introduced adroit allusions to the difficulty of being a gentleman in the face of strong temptation to be otherwise—an ancient and well-proven gambit, this, when uttered in a suitably chastened and melancholy sigh. But he perceived that she was not yet in the mood to respond properly to such cryptic approaches; premature boldness would defeat his whole campaign, nullify all his sacrifices.

He must be patient. There was plenty of time. Slow but sure—here was his cue. He departed by the 9.12, instead of the 10.08, and his tone and manner, as he declined to wait for the later train, were designed to convey the impression that he longed to linger but dared not trust himself. . . . He walked to the station, smiling at sundry agreeable meditations.

He did not return until, incited to feverish activity by his urgings, his tailor had completed the unspeakable tweeds and the attendant monstrosities of attire were in hand. Dight in them all, the sight of his image in his mirror appalled him; he might have been Jim Lockwood in the flesh! Not, of course, that there was the remotest facial or physical resemblance—the raiment centred attention so that such considerations as height and breadth, complexion and feature, became insignificant. He wished that it were possible to journey to Marsdale in a mask; the thought that some acquaintance not in possession of the complete circumstances might behold him arrayed in hyper-Solomonic glory dismayed him. But he was no coward; shamelessly he braved the eyes of the club attendants; in the full light of day he crossed the sidewalk to a taxi; stoically he flaunted his Joseph's-coat in the publicity of the Grand Central. And, when he came up the rose-lined walk to the verandah at Marsdale, he had his reward in the quick light of approval which flamed in Myra Lockwood's eyes.

"Oh!" she exclaimed ecstatically, "you wear them better than Jim!" Garrison's cup ran over.

V

Again they sat in the cool dusk on the verandah, the scent of roses heavily sweet, the Persians, gorged and somnolent, purring a sensuous undertone from their cushions, their claws luxuriously burying their needle-keen points in the cretonne and recurrently tearing free with a reminiscent, tearing noise, as the brutes dreamed joyously of onslaughts upon masculine anatomies. Garrison, watching the woman narrowly, knew that his hour was come . . . in the half-light he found her eyes fixed on him in the same queer, unfathomable look which he had learned to associate with her most favoring moods . . . the metal glowed for the shaping hammer—he had but to strike now, before it cooled again.

"Myra!" The word seemed to explode on his lips, to burst from him against his will. He had long since learned to simulate that involuntary utterance, but in this case there was little pretense. He almost meant it. "Myra—I can't stand it any longer! I know I'm a cad, but it doesn't signify—there are limits to a man's powers—of endurance, and mine are overpassed." He rose and came toward her, as though impelled by some force outside his being. "You must have guessed that it has come to me at last—that after all these empty years I've found the one woman—and found her too late! You know that I love you, don't you, Myra? There's no need

for words to tell you that, is there?"

"I am not blind, Arthur. I—saw." The low voice was wonderfully rich and tender. He seemed to feel it, as a caress, rather than to sense it through his auditory nerves. The music of it maddened him, as the fumes of subtle, potent liquor. He knelt at her feet, burying his face in the cool, scented silk of her dress; her hands, cold, steady, touched his hair.

"I'm glad!" he said, after a long pause, lifting his head to gaze defiantly into her eyes, "I'm glad—even though it kills me! I'm glad chance flung our paths together, opened my eyes, even though it was only to torture me like Tantalus himself, with the vision of what is forbidden. I'm glad I was weak enough to tell you, even if you find it in your heart to send me away, to deny me the blissful agony of seeing you, hearing your voice . . ."

Often, often he had read that self-same speech to ears attuned to hear it; it fell from his lips almost subconsciously. But now, for the first time, he almost meant it. For the moment it seemed as though to lose her would blast his life utterly, as though to fail to win her would drive him mad. Always before he had been confident of the event; now he was agonized by a fear that she would find strength to resist his subtlety, tortured by a persistent doubt of her. But she laughed, softly, wonderfully, and her cool fingers touched his cheek with their caressing absolution.

"I shan't send you away, dear. Life is too niggardly of its blessing to lose even one glimpse—'one glimpse if dimly but indeed revealed'—for the sake of such insignificant things as codes and creeds. Doubting heart—did you think me so weak and little that I could deafen my soul to Love and hear only the thin, squeaking voice of conventions? How little you know me!"

His arms rose eagerly, hungrily to her shoulders, but she denied them with a smiling dissent and, queerly submissive, he found them at his sides.

"I have thought it out, quite calmly, coldly," she went on. "It is all very simple, when one has the habit of reducing all problems to their elementals. Love is the most precious of all gifts; against it nothing stands fast. All codes fail, all conventions become absurd. Will you leave everything to me? Will you trust me—blindly, implicitly?"

"In life and death!" he heard himself saying huskily. "To end of all things, my very dearest!"

She laughed softly, caressingly, and again her hands touched his face.

"Then go now, please. There is—there is so much that I must arrange. You have my promise, and I have yours that you will trust me—to the end. It is enough!"

Enough! Enough for Arthur Garrison, who knew better than any other the supreme importance of seizing fortune at its flood, the wisdom of striking when the steel was white and plastic. Enough, to go now, at a mere word, when this glorious, yielding woman's lips had but confessed that he had conquered! And even as his frantically protesting reason shrieked its dissent, he heard his craven lips betraying him.

"Enough, dear — and so gloriously more than enough! When I had not one feeble hope to find that the most radiantly impossible of all dreams is to come true—"

"Then go, dearest. We must take this new joy gently, gradually, prolong each dear, ecstatic moment to its utmost. . . . Good night, my very dear!"

Their lips met as if without volition, and her kiss, cool, fragile, like the touch of a rose-petal on his mouth, lived in his memory as he made his bewildered way toward the station. His normal mental attitude returned to him as the strange, narcotic power of the woman's nearness faded; he was triumphant, again, with the assurance of conquest. And yet, as the ten-eight bore him southward, he felt vaguely the sensation of one who has been more kissed against than kissing—a feeling quite novel in his rich emotional ex-

perience. . . . Next morning, after sending orchids and a fervid note, he telephoned. A maid informed him that Mrs. Lockwood had left her home—departed for an indefinite time. No, there was no address.

VI

His flash of exultation winked out like a candle-flame before a sudden gust. He had lost, just as his fingers closed upon his prize; some saving remnant of caution, of reason, of loyalty, perhaps, had outweighed the woman's wakened yearning; she had taken the one course which promised safety. Hidden from him not even her traitorous impulses could destroy her. He was beaten, checkmated, balked for the first time in a career of successive victories! At first resentment against the woman buoyed him; his anger served him well as consolatrice; he was well rid of her, he assured himself; too many scruples, so unseasonably early in the episode, must have robbed it of all charm in any case. There remained a world of women; let her go!

But this, as the days multiplied with no word from her, he could not do. In vain the Aesopian expedient of self-persuasion that high-hanging grapes would only set the teeth on edge; he had desired her when he believed he had but to stretch forth a hand to make her his; now that she was beyond all prospect of attainment, he craved her with all the fervor of an intensely self-centred soul. It is a simple equation in elementary psychology, this phenomenon of a desire multiplied by the mere incident of an obstacle—Garrison should have been able to account for it, had his mind been fit to philosophize, to diagnose. As it was he simply suffered, hideously.

His state was not improved by the receipt of a wire, transmitted from some insignificant Ohio hamlet, two days after their parting.

"To the end of all things," it quoted, cryptically, anonymously. The vagueness tortured him; was he to understand that the affair was to terminate in some far future existence? Was it a promise or only the euphemism of a definite farewell? On the chance that Myra was to be found at Kanesville he fared thither, only to discover that the message had been sent from a through train. He went on to Chicago, but found no trace of her at any of the hotels; desperate, he continued westward to Lockwood's mining camp, but Lockwood had gone East two days before his arrival. It was easy to ascertain that Mrs. Lockwood had not joined her husband at the camp. Garrison returned, beginning now to realize that he was beaten. He looked up Lockwood at his downtown offices, only to be informed by a blasé office-boy that Mr. Lockwood declined to see Mr. Garrison, now, or at any future time. So she had told him! So she had confessed, taken shelter behind her husband! Garrison hated her, and, hating her, desired her more desperately than ever.

In the end he went abroad, hoping to regain his poise in travels, the remedy advised by all sound novelists for young men in his estate. London, Paris, Berlin, Petrograd, Vienna, Rome, the Riviera, Cairo — he tested these emotional *baden* in turn and in vain. Eyes which hinted of facile conquest only reminded him of the eyes which had surrendered and then retracted; lips which would have charmed him, in the old, light-hearted days, only stirred memories of the lips he had kissed but once and might not kiss again. Six months of this satisfied him that the treatment did not serve. He went back, finding a degraded, humbling consolation in the thought that each traversed league of sea brought him so much nearer *her*.

He went to his old rooms at the club. A little sheaf of letters waited him; he thumbed them through, feverishly, but found none from Myra; in the midst of unpacking a page brought him a wire; his pulses beat at his throat as his fingers tremulously tore it open. It was dated Marsdale and it read:

His first impulse carried him toward the door, past it, to the elevator shaft. Then, struck by a sudden recollection, he glanced at his reflection in a narrow mirror set in the wall and sped back to his room. She had softened to him when he wore the infamous tweeds, the shapeless collar, the hideous color-cacophony of a scarf! To be wholly safe, he had better not present hismelf now in the attire of an exquisite, impeccable in the least detail of sartorial convention. He found the ugly clothes where he had left them; he donned them joyously, as a martyr his sacrificial vestments.

The twelve-sixteen White Plains Local reminded him of a glacier; never had motion seemed so maddeningly deliberate. He fairly ran along the gravelled walk toward the rose-wreathed porch where she waited him, calm, cool, gloriously mistress of emotion in even this supreme moment of all moments; her hands, as his fingers touched them, were cold and steady and strong; there was no touch of hysteria in their pressure. And instead of the rain of kisses he had dreamed of showering upon her radiant face he found himself touching her lips with a single, gentle caress which thrilled him the more subtly because of its weird restraint. They drew apart, their hands clasped, their arms extended, their glances meeting. Again he felt the mystery of her gaze, the queer, nameless, inscrutable message that was in her eyes, in the expression of her lips.

"My dear, my very dear!" How wonderfully deep and rich her voice was! How proudly frank her confession of defeat! He had triumphed, at last, over this woman's strength—strength, he knew, far beyond that of all the others who had yielded to the greater strength that was in him! Pride expanded his collapsed spirit gratefully.

"I knew that it must come to this," he said huskily. "I knew that you would send for me at the last. But, oh, the weary waiting! The hours that were days and the weeks that have been years! Myra—Myra, when—?"

His eyes entreated. For a little space more he would be the suppliant. Then—then there were debts to be paid. She smiled, a curiously significant tenderness in her eyes and lips.

"Now!" she whispered, and he spared a thought from his flushed exultation to brand the tone as indulgent, patronizing. "To-day, if you wish!"

He drew her toward him, but she gently released her hands. "You shall drive me into town," she said, as one conferring a vast favor. "It will be just as it was the day you first realized the truth, dear."

New York! So much the better, even at the price of another desperate battle with the mechanics of a complicated motor and the intricacies of metropolitan traffic-regulation. She was discreet. Marsdale was no fit setting for romance. He helped her into the low seat, fumbled with unfamiliar buttons, levers, switches, achieved the feat of turning in the circumscribed driveway, thanks to minute instructions from the woman. They sped along the shaded highway, his confidence growing as he gained familiarity with the car, until they reached White Plains; here, as he would have driven straight on through, she bade him turn off at a cross street. He obeyed, his mind too engrossed to question minor preferences of route. A smoke-stained public building, ugly with the ugliness of most American public structures, loomed up at the side of the way.

"Stop here," she said. And again he obeyed unquestioningly. She descended, turned and glanced at him expectantly, summons in her eyes. He followed her, across the walk, up the grey, worn granite steps, into a corridor flanked by lettered ground-glass doors. Suddenly he found himself, without quite understanding how he had come there, standing before a wicket in a brass-enclosed pen, through which a bored young man inspected him without visible enthusiasm, draw-

ing toward him an open book and dipping a pen.

"Full name, las' name first," he commanded in a curious, sing-song tone.

Garrison was dumb, bewildered. He glanced helplessly at his companion. She stepped forward, wholly at her ease. "Garrison, Arthur Pilkington," she told the clerk. And, as he heard her, answering a succession of curt queries, increasingly impertinent, Garrison understood at last. He did not need the evidence of a previously unnoticed placard to enlighten him that this was the Marriage-License Bureau! He struggled to protest, to cry out against the horror which enfolded him, but his lips were dry, his tongue numb. Vaguely, as from afar off, he heard Myra's answers to questions concerning herself and saw her, stark, blank panic freezing him, submit the certificate of a Nevada divorce, granted a fortnight earlier as proof of her right to remarriage—marriage with him! He held back, when it was time for him to sign the blank, but Myra's eyes, resting on him with that well-remembered, unfathomable gaze, stilled his refusal unspoken, impelled his fingers to an almost subconscious signature.

His submerged consciousness was barely aware of ensuing formalities; a brief, vaguely unpleasant interview with a wispy, harried individual who was addressed as Alderman Legg—it annoyed Garrison to discover that no law of nature required an Alderman to be either Irish or German, mountainously constructed, possessed of stiff-haired, black moustache—more signatures—handshakings on the part of nondescript bystanders—it was all confused, unreal, like the inconsequential phantasms of nightmare, and the jumbled medley of it all was pervaded, dominated by Myra's peculiar gaze—the pregnant, expressive scrutiny which tormented him by his inability to interpret it, as a simple, baffling riddle may torture a proud intellect. He drove the car back, guided by frequent advice from the woman who sat beside him, to the old farmhouse. They entered. And, as he paused just within the door, stupefied, numb, his wife—*his wife!*—rested strong, firm, competent hands on his shoulders and drew him gently toward her until her cool lips touched his.

Horror gripped him as, in that breath, he unriddled at last the meaning of her gaze. It was ownership, the pride of possession, the condescending approval of the master for the prized chattel. And, as though to pile Pelion of ignominy atop of Ossa of shame, Garrison realized that he had been married in unspeakable tweeds and a soft, shapeless, unstarched collar!

VII

A SMALL motor, driven by a slightly stooped man of some five-and-thirty years, at whose side sat a tall, strikingly handsome woman, paused at the crossing in obedience to the traffic-officer's upraised hand. Arthur Garrison, arrayed in raiment of a texture resembling jute sackcloth, glanced away from the wheel on which his hands were clasped in a death-grip which whitened their knuckles. He lifted his eyes to the wide windows of a club. Beyond the plate-glass pane he saw a jaunty, juvenile gentleman, dressed in the ultra-perfect habit of the season and the hour and the mode, in the act of lifting to his lips a tall, frosty glass containing an amber liquid. The glances of the two men crossed, held fast.

"Drive on, dear," said the deep, rich chest-tone of the woman, and the motor moved forward as Garrison wrestled with his clutch. He wondered whether the smile on Jim Lockwood's cheerful countenance was merely that of half-amused condescension, or whether there had not been a glint of gratitude in it. His eyes rested for an instant on his wrist. There were five angry, red weals paralleling its cuticle. He wondered whether Jimmy Lockwood still adored smoke-colored Persian cats. On the whole, he doubted

it, although, the same authority which convinced him that Arthur Garrison abominated cigarettes, loathed Manhattan, abhorred alcohol and adored the rustic delights of Marsdale, had once assured him that Jimmy's passion for Persians amounted to an obsession. Yes, he decided, there *had* been gratitude in that glance. But the conviction afforded him no glow of philanthropic satisfaction.

A grin of greeting met his eye as he waited at another crossing. He read the glint of amusement in the glance of Kenneth Polk, idling happily along the shaded walk. He was conscious that Myra's gaze lingered on the fellow's eye-soothing exterior.

"What a nice-looking man!" boomed the deep voice. "Do you know him well, Arthur?"

A gleam of hope flickered across Arthur Garrison's mental vision. "Oh, very well indeed," he said. "I—I've been thinking of asking him out for dinner, one of these days."

"I wish you would," said the lady. And something told Garrison that Kenneth Polk undoubtedly sheltered an hitherto unsuspected weakness of large, smoke-blue, needle-clawed Persian cats. He sighed, almost happily.



CLEOPATRA, DEAD

By Harry Kemp

HERE lies in state the white and silent thing
That broke the sword of many a bearded king;
With a little laughter and a little lust
She brought great kingdoms crashing to the dust. . . .

Death, hast thou felt the thrill of her soft hand
And let in Love to thy forbidden land?—
Ah, if thou hast, the Queen has conquered thee,
And tipped thy darts with immortality!



THE SENTIMENTALISTS

By Myron Zobel

NOTHING had ever come between them till now—when duty called him East—two thousand miles of landscape lay between him and her, between Pittsburgh and Seattle. But true love found a means to bridge the gap. Each night, two hours after sunset, they went forth to their respective sills and, leaning far out, gazed in rapture at the moon,—four eyes with but a single moon.

"I can feel your presence, dear," she wrote. " . . . etc."

"For a few moments, darling," he replied, "the moon is darkened with the shadow of night; then, as I watch, lit by the splendour of your eyes, she bursts forth in all her dazzling beauty . . . etc."

Neither reckoned the change in time nor the Pittsburgh atmosphere.

A QUESTION OF NERVE

By Louis Wilkinson

HER letter had the postscript: "I enclose a copy of what I wrote to him. I hope you will think I have taken the right line."

Tom Meyrick read the copy:

> It will suit you, dear, not to mention the fact that I am going there to anybody, otherwise you will lose my money. If you are a *sensible* man you will tell both my people and yours that you know exactly where I am.
>
> If you divorce me you will lose the money, so *do* be wise and don't do so.
>
> I'll sign an agreement promising to let you have *all* my money providing you do not divorce me, and if there should be a baby to say it is yours. You won't have to maintain it so it will not cost you anything. It is ever so much better to settle things amicably, dear.
>
> . . . promising to let you have *all* my money . . .

Evidently she was scared to death of the scandal. Meyrick, as he finished his hotel breakfast, wondered what her husband would do. He had never met him: Molly had been practically separated for some time. Well, he wanted Molly; he didn't much like the business, but he wanted her, he must have her. He would cross whatever bridges there might be when he came to them. She wanted him, too,—no mistake about that. Yes, they would go down to Savannah.

Meyrick was in his late thirties, he was *homme mûr,* a man of many adventures, a man of energy. Nothing ever disappointed or surprised him. Women beat in vain against his self-possession; his doors were closed to them, he took them precisely as he wanted, no more and no less: he allowed none of their inconveniencing claims. He possessed them and himself at the same time. They were furious with him for that, furious but held fast, and not in the least, really, wanting to get away. After a while he dropped them, and returned to his principal pastime, hunting wild beasts. He had always spent much more time over wild beasts than over women: women he did not hunt. It was surprising how little he played their games, how much of a "run" he had for how very little time and trouble.

Molly Stansfeld was little and yellow-haired, with eyes of that gray-green that always stirred him—eyes most provocatively personal, with no view for anything that did not concern the occupations of her vanity or her sex. She challenged Meyrick: it was much more of a challenge than he had ever had in his life, and this was why he was so strongly attracted to her, in what was certainly—though, with Meyrick's pride in his freedom from illusion, he would never has admitted it—a new way. He had a resolute set passion for her, and she seemed to have a mania for him: so they were drawn to the usual union and the usual clash. But she entered the arena professionally accoutred, all she had went to her panoply of conflict: he was an amateur, untrained. Never before had he been sufficiently involved for there to be any question of a fray. He had rejected it, he had never met his antagonists: there was no reason for him to come up to the scratch. So, for all his adventures, he was pathetically unversed.

He was not, of course, conscious of the part he had played, nor of the part he was playing now. He knew that he felt a little uneasy, but he tried,

fairly successfully, to forget that, and he was helped enormously to forget it by the sense of the detachment of his view of Molly. She was, he knew, a silly little woman; she wrote silly little letters, she did silly little things. She was peevish, she had bad manners, she was, in fact, a female cad. Meyrick sympathized with her husband: she had been impossible with him. Nothing could have induced Meyrick to marry her, as she knew: he had no romantic illusions about her at all, he was not stupidly in love, like a boy. Again he congratulated himself, as he so often did, on his freedom from all illusions. He took up her letter again, bent on re-reading it with all possible cynical detachment.

One of the hotel boys came to him with a telegram. Meyrick, annoyed, opened the envelope. Of course it would be from her. Yes: "He is in Washington. Knows your hotel. Will try to see you. I leave to-night for Savannah."

"He" meant her husband, naturally—Rupert Stansfeld—"Rupert the Fearless," as Molly called him, because of his nervous horror of dogs. "Why, I've seen him turn pale—actually *pale*—when one ran out and barked at him!"

Meyrick was perpetually "refusing to let her talk" of the man, but the subject attracted her, and she had no scruples. She seemed bent on "showing him up," on "guying" him, on trying to make Meyrick despise him. An obsession with her . . . All in execrably bad taste, very like Molly . . . Confound it, how much he wanted the little cad! How tiny she was, what pale cheeks, what bright, vicious cat-eyes, what a teasing red, spoilt mouth! She dressed herself in a maddeningly meretricious way. She was shameless, she was sweet and shameless, she was soiled . . . rotten through and through, but he had never known any woman like her. She called him "Dolly"—his second name was Adolphus—how exciting he found that, her putting the effeminate nickname on him, how it seemed to corroborate and confirm him as the lordly male he wanted to be with her—wanted to be and knew he was! "Dolly" so obviously missed any taunt for him—and then the sensuous, intimate jingle of that name with hers! He began to suffer from his emotion; he was flushed, he looked peculiarly stern. The bell-boy, watching him, felt sure the telegram must have brought news of a slump in Wall Street.

Meyrick left the dining-room and went to the hotel office.

"If a gentleman of the name of Stansfeld inquires for me," he told them, "say that I shall be in for lunch at one-thirty—and for dinner at seven. Oh, and I'm taking the night train south," he added. "Savannah. See about checking my baggage, won't you? And get me the ticket and the sleeping berth."

II

By eight o'clock that evening Meyrick was in a thorough nervous irritation. Stansfeld had not turned up. Probably never came to Washington at all . . . only a bluff . . . flunked it. Meyrick ordered cognac, and was angry with the lagging waiter. What an extremely annoying day it had been—always was annoying expecting people who didn't show up. That fellow Stansfeld had been on his mind all the time, on and off. A teasing sort of day, vexed all through by a sense of uncertainty, of indecision, a sense that Meyrick couldn't properly locate. He had looked up two or three men whom he hadn't any particular reason for seeing, he had walked the streets to no particular purpose, he had attended to some business of no particular account.

He poured the cognac into his coffee. The coffee was lukewarm. Damn! He pushed it aside. "Another coffee, and another cognac!" he called sharply to the waiter. "No. A liqueur brandy. Best you have."

"Tha's ri'!" A grave inebriate voice

spoke from behind him. "Tha's ri'. 'Queur brandy. Tha's a sport." Meyrick turned and saw a large, loose, fair-haired man standing by his chair. The man wore a Tuxedo coat; the crookedness of his black dress tie set Meyrick's teeth on edge. "Hope not intrudin'? No? Wouldn' for the worl'. Sit at your table? Tha's a sport. Tha's ri'. Have a drink? My name's Stansf'l'—Doody Stansf'l'. Wife, she calls me Doody. Hi, you!" He addressed the waiter. "Lucky for you you're not a nigger." He stared at him. He was not in the least disorderly—not loud-voiced—but without question he was extremely drunk. He held up a wavering finger, the gravity of his expression grew more and more concentrated and intense. Meyrick, since hearing his name, was regarding him with uneasy interest. "Lucky for you. I'm goin' to kill a nigger to-night. Swell joint, this, though—swellest joint in Wash'n'ton. No niggers here. Man I know lives here. See him later. Get me a Bourbon Rye—Bourbon Rye for Mis'r Stansf'l'. Room number—wha's number? Three hundred and—three hundred an'—where's m' key? Jus' wait moment. Sure's in m' pocket. Never min'—never you min'. Get along. Bourbon Rye." He leaned confidentially over to Meyrick. "You wouldn' believe it," he said, "till 'smorning—hadn't touched a drop of liquor in years—not a single drop. *Do* you believe it?"

"Of course."

"You're a gentleman. No question of that. A gentleman. *Do* you believe it?"

"Oh, I can't help believing it!" Meyrick replied, a shade ironically.

"By God, you're English! 'Carn't'! By God! Don't I wish I could say that like you—you Englishman! My wife likes Englishmen—no harm, of course—pure's a lily—'Carn't'! I'd give a thousand dollars to say it that way—without bein' affected. Never shall, though—never. Bourbon Rye. I like whiskey. I like champagne, and I've thirty thousand dollars a year, can't I have it? Say, you're an Englishman. I was a personal friend—personal—of the late King Edward. He was a sport, you know that, you're an Englishman. I b'longed to same club in London. My wife, she was all set up over that. She's a lady. Edward—King Edward—used to come down there with a carriage an' a pair of high-steppin' horses—never used an automobile or a taxicab—an' everybody at the Club had to call him "Mr. Brown." If didn' do it—they fined him a hundred dollars. I introdooced him to President Roosevelt. He's a commoner, but King Edward didn' mind that. He was a sport, right enough. Commoner, mind you, but a fine man—fine—"

He paused and surveyed Meyrick searchingly: he was still portentously grave.

"A very fine man," said Meyrick, sipping his coffee.

Stansfeld gulped down his glass of straight whiskey. "In some respects he is"—he weighed his words—"and in some respects he isn't. I'm a Democrat. Gee!" he exclaimed in a subdued tone, "I'm sufferin' like a dog. I'm married. Lovely woman an' boy of five. He's mine all ri': I say he's mine. Quite ri'. He is—so. She's a lady, not a woman tha's no good. You understan'. You'd never guess why I'm in Wash'nt'n. Not a word—mustn' say a word. Private affair—honour of a gentleman. Everything perf'c'ly amicable—much better—so much better—amic'bly settled, you know. My boy had five million dollars left him by his grandfather, because he was his only grandson. Can't touch it till he comes of age. He's not three years old yet. The finest boy God ever made." He looked at Meyrick, expecting a reply.

"I'm quite sure he is." Meyrick knew that Molly had never had any children. "I wish you'd brought him with you."

"Ah, couldn' do that. Couldn'." Stansfeld shook his head sadly. "I know exac'ly where he is, though—exac'ly. Finest boy God ever made. He's

my boy, all right. You'd never guess why I'm here. Goin' through with it, though—ri' to th' end. Say, but I do love to hear you talk. England—I've just come from there. My greatest friend's Lord Arthur—Lord Arthur Mil—Milway. Do you know him?"

"No. Who's his father?"

"No father. Hasn' a father."

"Elder brother, then. I mean what's the title of the head of the family?"

"Milway. Old stock—old English stock Milway. His father's a doctor. Royal household. Theoretical musician. You know. See here, I'm suffering like a dog. Did I say I wasn' drunk? I'm drunk as hell. Have one on me. Waiter, a Bourbon Rye—two Bourbon Ryes."

"Another liqueur brandy for me."

"Tha's ri'. Liqueur brandy. Gee, but I do love to hear you talk! I know a gentleman when I see one. I'm a gentleman to the backbone. Old stock. Rupert the Fearless. Write poetry, too, you mightn't believe it, but I do. Fine stuff, can't write unless I'm drinking. Edgar Allan Poe. Don't smoke that cigarette too low. Take another. My father was a multimillionaire—the only one of this city. I'm a man through and through."

Stansfeld drew himself up in his chair, and brought his hand down—but quite gently—on the table. He stared at Meyrick, who betrayed no emotion: then suddenly he turned away, he looked scared, he crumpled up. Meyrick had been all the time closely observing him, and the main impression was one of dilapidated power: the man's forehead was broad, his eyes large, his nose straight and adequate; all his features were good in themselves, except that his mouth was lax and uncontrolled: no reason, though, why it should be. It had not come that way of itself. A fine, stultified face—a fine, stultified frame. The man had been blotted, he was almost cancelled. His snobbery—his harping on money—paraded pathetically at the beck of his liquor. Molly's lover could believe that she had poisoned his veins with her own middle-class preoccupations. She had rubbed his nose in her money. Meyrick remembered that letter. Lord, how she had destroyed the man! A woman about as big as a chicken, she'd taken him and squeezed him and wrung him out and thrown him aside.

"Look here," said Meyrick suddenly, at the approach of their drinks, "that waiter looks as though he wanted a pick-me-up. Suppose we stand him these?"

"All ri'. 'Course we will. Gentlemanly action. Certainly. Action of a gentleman—"

"These are for you," Meyrick told the man as he came up. "Take them away. No, we don't want any more."

Stansfeld looked sorrowfully at him. "No more," he said. "No more Bourbon Rye. Well, if it mus' be, it—mus' be. Who's drunk? I'm drunk. An' I'm damn gentle when I'm drunk. Funny thing. You know, I've never been out of this country. But I'm going. I'm going over with the Duke of Connaught, that is, if I'm sober. I'm a first-cousin of the President. Wilson, you know Wilson. And I've got an introduction to his Highness the King of England. We'll go and call together. You look at my face, you know I'm not lying."

Meyrick looked. The man's large, pale, watery eyes seemed unnaturally prominent, they had the pious concentration of a nervous young minister preaching his first sermon. The lips quivered painfully. Meyrick felt uncomfortable, as though he had unwittingly surprised an acquaintance in some ridiculous, embarrassing private act. He had no right to be there, it wasn't fair. Confound it all! Of course, if the man hadn't been Molly's husband he'd have cleared off long ago. Beastly curiosity. How damnable that he was Molly's husband! *Damnable,* Meyrick started. Why damnable? He must think this out. They were smeared up together, the three of them, and she'd done for him. It was horrible, really. Meyrick got up hurriedly.

"Don't go. Mustn' go." Stansfeld was much agitated.

"Sorry. Got to catch a train."

"Look here—haven' given offence, have I? Haven'—look here." He rose. "I'm common as hell, I know that. My wife told me so—common as hell. Don't know how I came to butt in with a gentleman of your standing. But don't go 'way. I'm sufferin' like a dog. Let's have another drink."

"Well, I'll stay if you *don't* have another."

"Certainly. Word of honour. Honour of a gentleman. My wife says I'm not a gentleman. She's right. Always right. I'm common as hell. Look at me. Used to be a fine man. Fine man once—right enough. She's a pure woman—pure 's an angel. Sit down. I've no money. But what's money? Money's dirt. I'm married, you know. Lovely woman, boy of eight." He lowered his voice. "I know exac'ly where she is—exac'ly—you understand. Tha's clear enough, isn't it? Perfec'ly amicable. Had a letter from her yesterday. Tha's why I'm here now. I want to—can't say more—private affair—honour of a gentleman—I—Lovely woman. See here—I've got a pome here. They gave me two hundred dollars for it. It's worth five hundred dollars more. I know it by heart.

'How far will you go with me, my love,
To the stile or the bridge or the great oak tree—'

That's fine, isn't it—fine? That's the real stuff—some pome. Written the year before we were married—on the boat from Norfolk to Washington—she was there—wonderful woman—never so much as laid a finger on her—pure 's a lily—"

"Well, how does it go on?" Meyrick interrupted. He couldn't stand this: it messed him up horridly.

Stansfeld very slowly repeated the two lines. He stopped. "What comes next?" he said. "Ah—the lane—something about the lane. I know—yes, I remember—remember perfec'ly.

'The lane is a lonely and fearsome place,
—And—there's no one journeying there but me.'

"That's like Edgar Allan Poe. Poe and Byron. My favourite potes. You can read them at all the libraries. It's cheaper—but I don't do it to save the money. No. Second verse. There's a second verse, too. Hell of a second verse—

'She smiled at the stile and the great oak tree—'"

He began to raise his voice, he spoke with a pontifical emphasis, his eyes seemed to swell; they were moister than ever.

'She smiled'—no, she scoffed—
'She scoffed at the bridge and the great oak tree,
And—looking me full in the eyes she said:
'I will go to the end of the lane with thee.'

"All my own, you know. Word of honour. You might think I'd gotten it from some magazine. Not in the least. That magazine stuff has nothing on me.

'And I loved her anew with a fierce strange love,
As high as the stars and as deep as the sea.
She would share my heaven and share my hell,
She would go to the end of the lane with me.'

"Say, what do you think? A wife like that—why, a man don't deserve it—one of God's saints—what? I tell you, she—I—"

Meyrick rose again. "Yes." He held out his hand. "Very fine. Remarkable verses. God!" he thought, "how she's done for him!"

Stansfeld took his hand, and stood clasping it. "Don't think I'm a cad, do you? You know there's some fellow said—and it's God's truth—'The fool's a fool, and the cad's a cad, whichever God meant him to be.' That's right. I'm what God meant me to be, so there's no harm done, is there? I'm—what—God meant me to be."

"No. You're not. That's just it. That's the point." Meyrick surveyed again the man's aspect of dilapidated

power: he was now the graver of the two.

"You know—I'd give a hundred dollars not to have told you those lines—a hundred dollars. I'm married, you know. Lovely woman—true as gold—little boy—best boy God ever—"

Meyrick released his hand and hurried off.

III

He went breathlessly up to the hotel office.

"I'm not going South to-night. You understand. Have to go North instead. Ticket and sleeper to New York. Yes, I'll go to the station right away. Get them myself."

He paid his bill and went to the elevator.

"Damned sentimentalist!" he repeated to himself, alluding to Stansfeld. "God!" he thought, when he got to his bedroom, "all gone to pieces. Goes to pieces with her, goes to pieces without her. Destroyed. That's what he got for taking to Molly. He's safer now. Only taken to drink. And I'll go to the Rockies! Oh, damn!" He remembered those desired grey-green eyes, that exquisite, peevish little body, that mouth of a wicked child. He wanted Molly terrifically. As he took his hairbrushes from the bureau, he caught sight of his face in the mirror. Scared, he looked scared. "I haven't the nerve," he said aloud. "Going to the Rockies—running away—lost my nerve."

He took the night train to Savannah.

MEMORY

By Frederic R. Buckley

THE fact that it was not laid in a drawer, but slipped between two warped layers of wood at the bottom of the desk, made me look at it with curiosity. A small curious dagger with a double-sided blade and a hilt of Buddha contemplating the Middle Way. The Buddha attracted me. His eyes were of a pink shade, of a stone that glittered; and the point of his façade on which his eyes were fixed bore the Hindu symbol for F, carved on a chip of moonstone.

Now, F is my initial.

I gazed at it for minutes, trying to connect it with myself, even distantly.

And it was not until I noticed that the chasing of the blade was smoothed out with old blood, and that a piece of tow-colored hair still clung to the guard, that I remembered.

How the years do steal our memories!

Fothergill, of course.

To think that I should have forgotten killing *him!*

IF a woman says "Good-bye!"—come back next day. If she says *"Au revoir!"*—take a one-way ticket.

OPEN confession is good for the soul, but bad for the reputation.

THE ACCOMPLICE

By Abigail Marshall

HALF a year had passed since Jay Bragdon murdered his wife.

He sat on the piazza of the summer hotel and indulged in reminiscences. He often gloated over his triumph; in fact, it was never entirely out of his thoughts.

He had succeeded in poisoning his wife, had got her money, and was now enjoying it without arousing a breath of suspicion that her death was not a natural one.

Jay Bragdon prided himself upon being an artist. The murder of his wife qualified him for that title, but his own was the only praise he enjoyed.

That was the one drop of bitterness in his cup of satisfaction. He longed to prove to the world, that foolish world which believed that "foul deeds will rise, etc.," that only the foul deeds of a bungler cannot be hidden. And Jay Bragdon was no bungler.

The smoke from his cigar curled upward, and his small eyes with their pinpoint pupils watched the atmosphere absorb it.

"And yet fools believe that nothing is lost!" he thought.

His pride in his achievement gave him intense gratification. The whole affair had been so simple, so easy of accomplishment—once emotion was eliminated.

He had carefully schooled himself before he started. His pursuit of the drug had been as subtle as the drug itself. He had administered it with the patience of a god, and like a god he had created; a so-called impossibility had become, under his clever hands, a fact. Here he was enjoying his wife's money and the world's respect—more, its praise—for his devotion to his wife before her death, and to her memory since, had earned for him the admiration of all who knew them. Even her sister—

It was of that sister he was thinking now when the sunlight caught the pinpoint pupils of his small eyes and made them shrink like a criminal trying to hide.

He shifted his chair into the shadow and looked across the road to the ocean sparkling beyond. Over to the left lay the city where the sister was waiting for him.

No words had passed the lips of either, but he knew she was waiting for him to speak, and was confident she would wait until he was ready.

Then—then!

He was not yet ready, however. Half a year is too short a time in which to recover from the loss of a dear wife.

He smiled. This was his first absence from the city. His friends understood he could not tear himself away from that grave which he had visited constantly and kept covered with flowers.

It was a comparatively small sum to pay for safety. Having eliminated emotion, he could also pay the small price of a daily half-hour at her grave without any inconvenience; rather he was rewarded, for it was there that he met the sister alone, the only near relative his wife left to mourn her. It was there he had learned what had sent him away, the promise to wait in the young girl's eyes.

Yes, he had come to this holidaying seaside to be alone and to think. For

the crowds gave him seclusion without loneliness.

He shrank from places full of large silences. This, he reflected, was another proof of his success, that he did not shrink from his fellows; he had not become morbid, or hyper-sensitive to the curious gaze of strangers.

There was only one habit he indulged in which he regretted even while he yielded to it. He used drugs a bit. But he required rest, and his brain, constantly alert, refused to stop working without an artificial aid.

He was temperate enough, however, limiting the dose and refusing to increase it even at the expense at times of intense suffering. He was planning to repeat his *coup*, and would need all his faculties to achieve a second brilliant success.

The dead wife's sister also had money which could be his—was within his grasp now. How many would have resisted the temptation to snatch at it—how many could?

He had all to gain and nothing to lose by waiting. With the excuse of craving constant news of the progress of a rose-bush he had planted on his wife's grave before he left, he wrote and received daily letters from the sister. His own were carefully worded, and could be read to a suspicious world without fear. Hers he read with cool gratification—and burnt.

She was young and beautiful enough to attract many admirers. There was the possibility that she would be attracted in turn. But he was confident that a few words from him would plant a suspicion against any wooer's disinterested love which would effectually remove that rival. A hint of his had already disposed of one ardent fellow; young men are easily discouraged when victims of their own pride.

No, Jay Bragdon did not fear any outside influence. Nothing but his own emotions could interfere with his plans.

He had removed himself from the society of his wife's sister to conquer a growing tendency to think of her sentimentally.

It was the merest sensation that warned him, a tiny thrill of pleasure at sight of her rounded figure as she stooped to pat the grave of her sister, while the tears fell on the flowers in her hands.

He had lifted her as she drooped forward, and she had clung to him, sobbing, begging him never to go away, never to leave her alone with her grief.

That was why he had come away. Something had stirred within him at the touch of her hands on his shoulders, something his dead wife had never caused him to feel. If she had—

He dismissed the thought abruptly. His wife was dead. She had been dead to him from the day he had married her, intent on getting her money.

The sister might be another case entirely if—if she were not the sister.

To allow oneself to fall in love with the sister of the wife one has murdered would be sheer madness, slow suicide.

Jay Bragdon would remain true to his one love—the love of life. But life was not life without money. He had plenty of money for his present needs. For his future he must provide.

Having eliminated emotion, he was now enjoying life for the first time. He would keep out all emotion in future.

He had studied the cases of unsuccessful murderers and traced their failure to that one cause—emotion in one form or another. Impatience, carelessness, over-confidence, passion—all left some clue to shout "murder." He alone had proceeded so carefully, so patiently, that success was inevitable.

And now he would repeat that success. No, not immediately. At least another year he would wait.

In the meantime, he would school himself into the same insensibility to the sister's charms that he felt to those of his dead wife.

Daily he was growing stronger. He planned to test himself, frequently and severely, before he would speak the words that should put her in his hands.

He would continue their correspondence. He would read those unwritten words of love she sent in almost every

letter, read them with fervour, his finger on his pulse. He would imagine himself taking her in his arms, giving assurances of his love, kissing her, Then he would return and meet her—many times—alone.

For the next six months, with the same deliberate patience he had used to achieve his first end, Jay Bragdon carried out his plan. And his indifference increased as the young sister's infatuation for him grew.

Every tone of his voice, every look with which he won her, was carefully rehearsed. Alone in his room he weighed and measured their value as an actor rehearses an important rôle.

At the same time the grave of his wife was kept constantly a-bloom with flowers.

If Jay Bragdon felt any strain it was known to none but a tiny glass tube, which was beginning to be called into slightly more frequent use.

II

It was during one of his absences that his serenity was first disturbed. He received a letter from his dead wife's sister telling him of a mysterious telegram that had reached her. It was unsigned, and urged her to communicate with a man named Thomas Brent. The address of this Thomas Brent was sent in full, but she was writing to her brother-in-law to ask if he knew who and what this man was, and to advise her.

Did Jay Bragdon know the man "Thomas Brent"? No, not the man, but the man's reputation. Thomas Brent was the name which Jay Bragdon had repeated to himself many times in his constant self-congratulations. Thomas Brent was the man, of all the world, he desired to openly exult over. He yearned to boast to that man that he, the unknown Jay Bragdon, had outwitted him without the other even suspecting that he was being outwitted.

Thomas Brent, the star unknown; the detective who had tracked down so many criminals, men who paid the death penalty, often without ever learning the name of the man who had unearthed their crimes!

Did he know Thomas Brent?

For the first time in years Jay Bragdon hurried. For the first time in years he yielded to an emotion—fear.

It was not until he heard his message being ticked out at the telegraph office—"Pay no attention to mysterious wire—a silly hoax—no such person exists"—that his breath settled down into something like its usual slow evenness. And then only for a moment. For, as he glanced up at the clock above the counter at the far end, a sensation that is not uncommon took possession of him.

The clock, the girl at the instrument, his own actions all seemed strangely familiar. It was as though, in a previous life, or in a dream, he had lived it all before.

"I'm indulging in emotions," he admonished himself severely, and walked smartly and determinedly back to his hotel.

There, alone in his room, he endeavoured to compose himself. A glint of light on glass, an almost imperceptible click, and his pulses ceased to jerk and pound as though trying to break through the skin.

The mysterious message was no more mysterious than many other things which were never explained to a wondering world, he assured himself. The girl, his dead wife's sister, would do his bidding, and forget the incident. There was nothing for him to fear.

For several days it appeared so, yet the little tube was kept more busy than Jay Bragdon cared to remark.

This might have been the result of an unusual silence on the part of his dead wife's sister. He had received but one letter since the one telling him of the mysterious message, and he had written her three. Three or four, was it? Four. No, five. Yes, he had written her five letters.

Yet only four days had elapsed since he sent that telegram, and he did not write that day.

He could not have written more than three times. He would not write more than one letter a day, and to-day—

Why should he fancy he had written five letters?

He knew what was wrong. He must decrease that secret dose. He must keep his faculties intact if he hoped for success in the future. And his memory was the most important of all. It was that which had enabled him to succeed before. He had exulted in the fact that during his studies he had made no notes—not one—not even temporarily had he put a single fact he wished to absorb on paper. He would have no ashes with one telltale, unburnt corner to betray him.

Ashes! That reminded him that his dead wife's body was not ashes.

He had, unfortunately, discussed cremation with her once and she had expressed an aversion to it. Although he immediately had changed his point of view and agreed with her that it was loathsome, she had left written instructions with her lawyer which arranged for an ordinary burial.

But he knew he had no cause to fear, even should a disinterment take place.

His wife's letters, still carefully preserved by her sister, were full of gratitude for having, in her protracted illness, the constant attendance of a devoted husband—himself.

Never had he permitted himself an illicit companionship; he had placed himself in no one's power, not even for a moment.

The next letter he received from his dead wife's sister caused him more alarm in spite of himself. It read:

"The man Thomas Brent does exist because he called to see me. He was directed to me, he said, by an unknown correspondent. He didn't have the letter with him, so I couldn't see it. But the writer told him to get into communication with me as he would need me later. He thought I might know why. Of course I told him about that anonymous message and showed it to him. He told me to act as though nothing had happened and made me promise not to mention the affair to a soul. I did not tell him I had already written you, so I didn't show him your wire. But I shall do as he says, not tell anyone, except you, of course, and wait to see what happens next. But I feel so miserably upset—because—I promised not to tell, but I must tell you, dear—Thomas Brent is a detective. I hate a mystery—do advise me what to do—your affectionate Bertha."

Jay Bragdon advised by wire:

"Do nothing—forget the whole business and destroy all messages, mine included."

Then he spent many hours communing with himself.

It might be well to remove his dead wife's sister from all possible future meetings with Thomas Brent. Yet, if she disappeared, Thomas Brent's suspicions, supposing they were taking form, would then become convictions, and he would pursue the girl.

On the other hand, if the worst should happen, she had those letters of his dead wife praising his devotion, which she would certainly show if his name was mentioned between them.

Besides, he could not trust himself to marry until he had himself under perfect control. Two or three slight lapses of memory had unnerved him. They were inconsiderable trifles, a borrowed pen, a forgotten round of golf with a chance acquaintance, but in each case his mind, for all he could recall of the incident, remained a blank. He had the evidence of the pen in his possession, and the acquaintance's laughing accusation that he had forgotten the game because he lost it. The explanation was simple enough; his mind was so full of this mysterious correspondent of Thomas Brent and his dead wife's sister that he did many things automatically.

But he must obtain full control of his faculties before he ventured to take an important step.

To this end he kept to his room for some days, during which he received

three letters from his dead wife's sister, short, incoherent, disturbing.

He gathered that Thomas Brent had seen her again, probably several times, that he had put her under some oath not to divulge anything he told her, and that she was trying to keep her word. But what finally leaked out from her incoherent ravings—she was apparently becoming more and more unstrung—was the fact that the detective was getting some important information from an accomplice of some murderer. She did not mention her dead sister's name, but the letter ended in a blur as though she had shed tears upon it.

Jay Bragdon sat up and laughed. He got up, walked round the room and laughed again. He went to the window, looked out at the crowds on the street below and burst into another loud laugh.

It was truly amusing. Some practical joker was going to get his head into a noose by trying to hoax the great detective.

He examined the letter in his hand more carefully, and perceived that something had been erased and written over. He turned on the electric light, shut out the fading daylight, and with a damp sponge and a magnifying glass sat down beneath the electric lamp.

After a few moments' careful manipulation his efforts were rewarded. The erased word was "disinterred."

With a cry he leaped to his feet. Then he forced himself to sit down again, and drew out the little glass tube.

Again he lived over those months of careful preparation. There was nothing, absolutely no evidence that could be brought against him. He was convinced that that "disinterred" referred to his wife's body. But why had not her sister said so? Because Thomas Brent ordered her to remain silent?

That could mean but one thing, suspicion pointing to himself. Otherwise why was not he, the husband, consulted?

Yet the detective was in correspondence with an "accomplice." Only a fool would work with an accomplice. He had taken no one into his confidence, he had given no one the slightest cause to suspect him. The poison he had used had been slowly and gradually accumulated by him before he married the woman he meant to kill. It had been bought in very small quantities in various cities.

In the same careful way he had studied its use, never having a book on the subject in his possession. He had procured his knowledge from the shelves of libraries, being careful not to visit the same library twice in succession, and even taking trips to other cities to consult their libraries rather than risk being observed by an attendant. It had been his pride to remember them all and the dates on which he had visited each, though now, such was the state of chaos this mysterious "accomplice" had wrought in his brain, he could not even recall the names of the cities.

Rest and quiet was what he prescribed for himself. He telephoned to the hotel office and gave imperative orders that he was not to be disturbed on any account, no matter how urgent. Then he lay down, the artificial aid to rest in his hand.

He had lain quiet for less than an hour when he heard the noise of a key turn in the door. Without opening his eyes he demanded why his orders were not obeyed.

Instead of the mumbled excuse he expected and the quick exit of an intruding maid, a man's voice replied:

"You're wanted, Bragdon."

III

On his way out, between two men who never took their eyes from him, the clerk held out an envelope.

A third man, following behind, took it, opened it, then passed it to one of the guard, who handed it to his prisoner.

Jay Bragdon read the signature. It was from his dead wife's sister. It read:

"They are coming for you to-day. Fly."

He smiled, and asked the clerk:

"When did this arrive?"

"Just after you said you were not to be disturbed, sir."

In the taxicab on the way to the station, Jay Bragdon looked across to the third man.

"Are you Thomas Brent?" he asked.

"The same," was the reply.

"Your charge is absurd; you have no case against me."

At a sign from the detective the two men between whom the prisoner sat took firm hold of Bragdon's hands.

"What's that for? Do you think I'm going to jump out of a flying taxi?" he asked.

As no reply followed, he continued:

"You might satisfy my curiosity and tell me if you have seen the man who called himself my accomplice, and what he looks like."

Still the three men maintained silence, but their eyes never left his face.

"Don't stare so," he begged, and then —"I wish you'd tell me."

"You don't remember?" said the detective, slowly, a tone almost of pity in his voice.

"I don't remember a man who never existed," said Bragdon impatiently.

The detective took a sheet of paper from his pocket and, unfolding it, held it before the prisoner's eyes.

Jay Bragdon read the words—

"To Mr. Thomas Brent.—Call on Miss Bertha Collins, 3— Riverside Drive,—make her acquaintance; you will need her help shortly in a criminal case."

The note was unsigned.

The detective returned the paper to his pocket and took out some others.

"I have also," he said, "the full account of your crime from the moment of its inception, the names of libraries, dates of your visits, books you studied there, drug-stores where you procured the poison, the aliases you assumed when signing for it, and the dates, all of which data I have verified. This last communication is, as you see, signed."

The prisoner's eyes expanded with fear, his cheeks sagged, and his lips fell helplessly apart. Slowly the blanks in his memory were filling with pictures of his forgotten actions as he stared at the paper still held up before him.

For Jay Bragdon recognized the handwriting.

It was his own.

I LIKE HER

By Jean Farquar

I LIKE her. She loves me and does not show it. When I enter her presence I can see the sudden light in her eyes. It flares up as I come into the room, it goes out as she forces herself to be calm. She so arranges it that there is always a rest for her hand when it is near mine, because when it is unsupported it trembles. She is often "out" when I call, but almost always I can see the curtains swing back into place as I go down the veranda steps.

She loves me enough to be my friend. She even introduces me to people to whom I have taken a fancy, though I have seen her bite her lips in doing so. If I married someone else she would still be my friend.

I think I shall marry her, because, in spite of her loving me, she does not show it.

THE DEVIL'S GLOW

By Alice Woods

I

"I'M sorry that Olive has a headache." Kilgore bent over the lamp and lighted a cigarette, and laid a cigar down upon Milburn's writing table.

"She often has them," said Milburn, his fingers touching, and gingerly rejecting, the cigar.

The shabby, book-strewn attic was still for a moment, Kilgore straddling a cane chair, smoking, gazing at the closed door behind which Olive was fighting it out with her headache. The night was stifling, the glow of the city sky flushing the propped-open skylight and silhouetting the line of roofs outside the one window. A fire-escape crossed the window, making a fragile bridge to the court five floors below, and the curtain, darned but fresh, moved gently on the light stir of night air.

"It's no use talking, old man," said Kilgore. "If you aren't getting ahead, you are just as surely slipping back."

Milburn smiled. "Poets never admit—anything."

"Even a poet does well to keep moving."

The poet's thin white face grew sharp in derision.

"The way back may be as diverting as the way ahead, but it isn't remunerative, is it?" insisted Kilgore.

"How do you dare be so damn sure that you know the way ahead?" Milburn's breath was troubled and he coughed nervously.

"Results, Dick. By results men find their way."

Milburn's voice rose high and finicky. "By results you mean something you can feel in your fingers, and can *spend!* Devil's results!" He crumpled down into his great, shabby chair with a racking fit of coughing, then in a whisper threaded with malice he bent toward Kilgore and snapped his long white fingers. "That, for your results!"

Distress played over Kilgore's well-groomed blond face, and made him feel as big as he looked in the run-down old room. "Of course, old man, money isn't success. I have reason to know! But a good time is a sort of success, and money helps to that, doesn't it? Why, Dick, you can't pretend to a good time. You begin to look like the faded drawing of a man—"

Milburn opened his great shadowy eyes and all the cynicism of hurt ideals played over his pallid face. "Am I supposed to be delighted—or insulted?"

"You'll pretend, I suppose, to live in this hole for love of it, you duffer?"

"Poets don't pretend."

"Oh, don't they though!" A faint flush stole over Kilgore's face, and he held himself carefully. "The trouble is, Dick, that it is not only you. There is Olive to think of: Olive and the kiddies. The last time I saw them, Olive looked worn out, and so shabby, Dick. And the youngsters looked—puzzled—"

Milburn lifted his thin arms and dropped them heavily upon the arms of his chair. "As terrible as *that*—?"

Kilgore pulled himself together and bent forward eagerly. "Why not get a little of the laugh that's coming to you, Dick? Why not climb up on the back of the new Pegasus and grin,

with the rest of us, at the mob trailin' after? He's a good beastie," he laughed. "He kicks, and snorts, and whinnies, and he runs by steam and a keyboard. He never balks, unless *you* do. An he's got the right of way, old boy! There's a very good poet's chair, but a grumpy poet hasn't got a show—"

Milburn doubled in a laugh. "Imagine me—me!—on your steam rocking-horse!"

"You, Dick—" Kilgore grinned and walked about the room, stopping a moment to touch Milburn's frayed cuff. "You be damned! You may go to your fate in a flower-pot on wheels, if you like. It's Olive you've got to think of."

Ecstasy filmed Milburn's hungry face. "Olive!" he breathed. "Olive and I once expected great things of ourselves!"

The film caught Kilgore, too, paling him, and unconsciously his voice lowered. "Olive was wonderful when you married, Dick. How she boasted to the rest of us of your nothing-a-year! Her faith in you was perfectly beautiful!"

Milburn sat very still in his chair, a curious gleam of shrewdness upon him, and he lifted his eyes and considered Kilgore, then smiled with amusement. Kilgore turned toward the window a moment, and when he came back to his chair he put a cloud of smoke between them. The smoke cleared, and he shrugged his great shoulders and smiled good-humoredly.

"You've got to let the fact in, Dick, that simple every-day things count very much in this world. We knew better than Olive did, that you had more talent than all the rest of us together. Talent was what we worshiped then. But we can't endure seeing you all, grilling and fading out, up here in the grime and heat. And we miss you both, Dick!"

Milburn quivered, and he bent toward his table and his hands hovered over his papers. The moment was sharp and drove home. Kilgore got up again and strode about the room. Milburn repaid his tact by staring, in a fit of gusty womanish annoyance, at the clatter of his brusquely deserted chair.

Kilgore turned back sharply. "Then Dick, if you won't come with us, why not let me give you enough for a lift? Why not not let me tide you over, till you have finished this thing you are working upon?"

The heat-lightning of shrewdness played again over the poet's pallor, then he dropped in his chair, and smiled. "Poems are never finished," he temporized.

"What rot!" blurted Kilgore.

"We have enough to get along with," said Milburn stiffly.

"You have, for the four of you, about what Oakley's wife spends on her gloves!" said Kilgore.

"Oakley!" laughed Milburn. "Why drag him in?"

"Oakley'd come here, if you'd let him, Dick, and you know it!"

Milburn waved his hand lightly, then touched his papers again. "Perhaps this will do the trick for us," he smiled.

Kilgore sighed desperately. "It isn't poetry that does the trick, old man. It's good government and a well-greased machine."

"What do you know about what I am doing?" asked Milburn angrily.

"I know," said Kilgore quietly, "that whatever you are doing, it is being beautifully done."

Milburn's frail body and hungry eyes followed the bent of praise irresistibly. "To do beautifully!" he whispered. "Beauty, Jerry, is the breath of life to me. Beautiful work!" He turned his head and stared at the bedroom door, the hunger in his eyes growing furtive as he confessed. "I don't care who suffers! I don't care who goes under. They have got to learn to understand, to wait. Nothing but work *is* real to me!"

Kilgore stood looking down upon him, fascinated. "Well, perhaps you'll make it in your own way—in spite of yourself!" He stared at the burning tip of his cigarette to keep his eyes away from Milburn.

"I will if I'm not hounded out—if I'm allowed to!"

"I agreed with you once upon a time: when we were callow, and had the time—and the impudence!—to imagine that this world of ours over here had a heart and a soul, and cared about art. I believe in it even now," he smiled. "But the point is, Dick, that being an artist doesn't let one out of being a man."

Milburn's eyes shone with ire. "Being an artist lets one in for hell!"

"No doubt. But there's Olive. Olive married the man as well as the artist."

Milburn broke into a nervous cough and laughed. "Women do marry men!"

"Two growing children rather cut out the comfort of smart phrasing, Dick," said Kilgore, holding his voice even. "What are you writing?"

"A tragedy."

"In verse?"

"Of course!"

"It might be played?"

Milburn flashed about and shook his hand toward the lights of Broadway that glowed beyond the window, putting the stars away from their summer-night sky. "You mean, played *down there?*—where all that tinsel and gibbering goes on?"

Kilgore laughed. "Thanks! But you are wrong, old man. All of that is the day's own way of expressing itself."

"Then," said Milburn, "let us have night!"

"Somebody's always right," laughed Kilgore good-naturedly.

"And the rest of 'em are always wrong!" said Milburn, his great eyes aglow. Then a queer grey crept over him, faded out his glow till his pallor was ashen. "You know, Jerry," he paused, breathing sharply and peering over his shoulder at the open window, "that horrible glow out there, night after night, endlessly, is going to be the death of me! I—hate it so! But—it beckons me." He laughed shockingly, his eyes glittering at Kilgore. "It's the devil's own breath—that glow! I—don't know how long I'll be able to resist it. It burns there all night, behind me, torturing and taunting me—" He dragged his hand across his brow and tossed back his hair, moistening his dry lips and doing his best to smile. "You'll take me for a madman," he said hoarsely. "I'm *not* mad, though. The truth is," he paused, letting ire carry him on, "that you, and Oakley, and the rest of you, believe in your nasty little paper-dolls, and your brainless horse-play! You couldn't produce anything else to save your souls. You've got the souls of tradesmen, and you've just brains enough to fool yourselves. And, in secret, in the dark, when you are shut up alone in your padded rooms, you chuckle and call all the miserable stuff you produce—*art!*"

"Why, thanks, old man—" Kilgore stood back, his eyes narrowed, his arms folded tight.

For a moment an elevated train passing at the corner seeming to thunder through the room, Milburn, exhausted, leaned back in his chair and closed his eyes. Slowly the venom sank away from his face, leaving it white as marble. "I'm sorry, Jerry! You drove it out of me, with your everlasting impudent goading. I hate, I loathe the stuff you write. But—you are the only one of the old crowd that has had the courage to stick to me. I'm a wreck,—and I know it better than anybody. The devil out there knows it, too!" he laughed, fear in his eyes again, as they turned back to the window. "It's very decent of you to have come up here in the heat and dust. It's good of you to want to put me straight. But, Jerry," he grinned, "you have something to learn, too. I *won't* be put straight!"

Anger drew Milburn's frailty with its terrible line of fire. "Are you doing anything for that cough?" Kilgore asked.

"It's nothing," Milburn winced. "It's this hellish feathery heat!"

"For a nothing, it makes a lot of noise, Dick!"

"Nothings always are ill-bred, noisy things, Jerry."

Kilgore persisted. "Why not see a doctor?"

"Why not, indeed!" Milburn stared back.

Kilgore stood smoking, then he lifted his glance with a determined smile. "There's nothing for it, Dick, but to kick me out—out of your window over there—among my electric stars and into my friend the devil's glow?"

"I don't want to kick you out. I'm thankful to see you, devil's envoy that you are! I—my God, how I hate that window—! Don't speak of it again, Jerry!"

Kilgore bent impulsively, his arm across the back of Milburn's chair. "You won't take a lift, Dick?"

"No, I won't," said Milburn shortly.

Kilgore stood, and for a long moment his eyes found refuge in the faded white door of Olive's room. "I must be off, on my own legs, then, if you won't kick me out," he said absently. "I've an appointment down town in the glow, Dick!—with Seamann. Seamann's the devil's own, if you like! He's putting on my last batch of paper-dolls. He looks for a big hit. Seamann likes hits. My best to Olive. I shall come in soon again, and hope to see her. It's a long time since we have had a chat. Good night, old man."

Milburn got out of his chair stiffly, his trousers bent in tragic image of his perpetually bent knees, and he followed Kilgore to the door. "Good night, Jerry. Millions to you!"

"With all my heart, if you'll take half, Dick! Good night!"

"Good night!" said Milburn, standing for a moment against the closed door, his head bent, and his eyes closed. "Good night!" He listened till Kilgore's step had gone from the stairs, and a door had closed down in the street. His hand slipped from the door knob and he moved to the center of the old room, his eyes fixing upon the open window, his thin hands clenched. With an effort he came back to his table and he picked up the cigar Kilgore had left there for him. He held it, he smelled it, and a whimsical amusement shone upon his face. He stood before a row of wooden pegs and looked at the boy's hat with a little blue star in the center of the crown, and the girl's pink sun-bonnet, hanging by its tied strings. His own old hat, a soft straw bought in better times, had taken on its poet's distinction. Milburn stroked it as he stuck it on the back of his head. Sniffing at the cigar in his hand, he crossed the room softly and opened the bedroom door a crack "Olive!" he whispered.

"Yes, Richard?"

"Kilgore's been here."

"I know. I heard his voice."

"He gave me a beautiful little cigar, and," he laughed, "I'm going to take it out for a walk! I shan't bring it home! Headache better?"

Olive's low voice, as sweet as her name, grew eager. "Do go, Richard! You've worked all day. I'm better. Don't worry about us. Stay out as late as you like. The air will do you good."

"Why not come along?" said Milburn.

"No, thanks, dear. I'm in bed, and it's tiring to dress. I couldn't leave the babies—"

"Babies! The idea! They are as big as you are, silly!"

"But not nearly as old, Richard!" Olive sighed. "You'll waken them, talking."

Milburn seemed not to hear. "Kilgore's been giving me a dressing-down, Olive. He came up to rouse my sense of duty! Just for once I am going to fool him. I'm going to put aside my poem, and I'm going out in the street and pick up a thriller. A regular seller—Olive!"

For answer a low, choked laugh slipped through the crack of the door and smote him. Milburn stiffened, and peered at the open window as if the laugh could only have come from out there. With his hand extended, unconsciously guarding his little cigar, he tottered away from the door. Then, putting his old hat on straight, he went out

to the landing and left the place to the lamp and the glow of the city and the window in the sky.

II

OLIVE stood in the bedroom door, glancing back into the room to be sure the children were quiet. Then she came into the room and closed the door again. She dropped into the armchair, the warm lamplight touching gently her long braids of heavy, straight light-brown hair, and her old pink flannel wrapper. Her bare feet were thrust into old slippers that had been pretty enough. Her hands were small, but red and rough, and she had the habitual gesture of holding them, one within the other, with the subconscious distress of the woman who has not always been used to work. She put back her head and closed her eyes. Time passed. A sound startled her, out on the landing, and she sat up bewildered. Someone stopped outside the door. She got out of her chair. For a moment there was silence, then there came a knock on the door.

"Who's there?"

"It's I, Olive! Kilgore! I want to talk with you."

"Jerry!" she gasped. Then, fastening her wrapper and smoothing her hair, she stood hesitating. A sudden thought made her fly to the door. She flung it open. "Nothing has happened —to Richard?"

Kilgore came in, flushing hotly, hesitating. "No!" he said shortly. "Nothing ever happens to the Richards! I— I beg your pardon, Olive, I'd no business to say that!" He laughed and shook her hand. "I'm sorry I've startled you!"

She sighed absently, staring up at him. "Jerry," she blushed, "I'm—a sight!"

"You are, indeed, dear girl," he smiled into her eyes. He followed her back to the light. "The headache?"

She looked at him, puzzled, then spread her hands. "It was a fraud, Jerry. There wasn't any. I just had to get into the dark alone, to think." Curiously she glanced at him. "You knew that Richard wasn't here?"

Kilgore laid his hat and coat, his stick and gloves back upon their chair by the landing door. "Of course I knew! Dick's talk stirred me to the dregs. Hopelessly hopeful old crank that he is! He gave me the whole of his critical mind to-night," he smiled. "I stopped at the corner to get a drink. I was on my way downtown to talk shop with Seamann, and I couldn't go before I'd drowned the ideals old Dick's vituperations had resurrected. Just as I came out of the place, Dick passed by."

Olive sighed. "He's tired out. He works all day long."

"Well, he's not working now! He was smoking, and smiling to himself— his hands behind his cranky old back, and his thoughts on the moon! He didn't see me. He had forgotten me. And you, too. I'm thankful. Seamann may go hang, too, Olive. I have been trying to bring about a talk alone with you for a long time. This is providence. Does the lamplight hurt your eyes?"

Olive turned her head to hide sudden absurd tears, raised by a mere kindness, so quick she had no power to down them. "No," she said. "I don't mind. I *haven't* a headache!" she smiled. "You forget that I confessed."

"You know, Olive, I think that Dick is—ill."

"But who wouldn't be?" she sighed. "He's more tired than the rest of us. He's brain-tired, too!"

"Dear girl, it is dreadful."

"It's hardest for Richard, really it is."

Kilgore smiled grimly. "He's playing out, you think?"

Olive turned her head and looked out of the open window. "I know that he is!"

"I wish," said Kilgore, "that you'd have that window boarded up!"

Olive turned her eyes to him. "What —? Why, I love looking out there, especially at night, when the sky glows with all the downtown lights. It's gay

and friendly. Why 'board it up,' Jerry? What a funny idea!"

Kilgore shook his head and considered her. "Dick's got that glow on his nerves. Hasn't he told you? He ranted away at me right enough—called it 'the devil's glow.' I'm—glad *you* don't hate it!"

Olive laughed self-accusingly. "It's pretty hard for a woman without much brain to hate gay and friendly things, Jerry, just because they aren't—high-minded! I—" she confessed, her face fairly girlish at the thought, "I sometimes just long to go down there, and spend, in a minute, every cent we have in hand, and see everything from one end of the place to the other, all at a gulp! It's treason to Richard,—but it's the truth!"

"Bless you!" whispered Kilgore.

"I often think," Olive sighed, "that Richard would have been better off with someone who did hate that sort of thing, just the way he does."

Kilgore pulled at his small, closely cropped mustache. "This is the first of August. Do you imagine that you can get through a whole summer up here without all being ill?"

"Lots of people do, Jerry," she smiled patiently.

Kilgore fumed. "You and the kiddies are coming to me for a month. You must. I'll go to—anywhere!—the front, if you insist!" he laughed. "You leave it to me! Let Dick grill with his confounded rhymes if he likes—"

"You see," said Olive quietly, "the trouble is that he can't get along without me. He'd never leave his books, you know."

"Nobody wants him to," said Kilgore.

"Jerry! Please, now—"

"Very well," he smiled into her eyes.

"I've tried and tried to think out some way of earning a little. I mean in some way that Richard wouldn't dream of. He has such an everlasting pride—"

Kilgore gave a groan. "Pride!"

"I never did have inventive brains," sighed Olive. "I'm tired when night comes, with the children and the cooking, and I get awfully impatient with all the stairs. Not long ago—" she bent forward, her hands clasped while she confessed, "I got absolutely possessed with the idea of just going off to the country with the kiddies, without any plan. Nothing seemed to matter but to get to trees, and space, and air. I just felt that work *would* be there. We'd have starved! But it was just a fixed idea with me, for days; and I got afraid to have Richard go out of the place, for fear I'd take them and go in spite of everything."

"And I have acres and acres!" said Kilgore grimly.

"It's in the little every-day things that Richard would miss me most," she said.

Kilgore strode away from her, across the room to the window. He came back as brusquely and stood near her chair.

"It's good to see a man in evening clothes again," she smiled.

"Damn this life," whispered Kilgore. "I've got everything that glow of Dick's out there has to give—and it is not what I want. Dick has you, and just as he vows he hates the glow he longs for it! You make me feel like murder, like tearing things down—you small creature, dear to me as nothing else is dear—with your quiet, your goodness, your patience!"

"But Jerry!—it isn't as hard—as all of that—"

"How long have I got to stand by and see the life slowly tortured out of you?"

"But—Jerry!—please—"

"I don't care if you are angry! I don't care what happens, if you will let me see, once and for all, that you know that I *do* care for you and nothing else. You realize, Olive? You'll say so, and give me my peace of mind?" He caught up her hand and held fast to it. "Do you think that a man with life in him can see the woman he loves breaking down under the work of three servants, needing the common comforts of life, and wasting her soul on a selfish and blind—poet! I care so much that

I cannot see any more reason in putting up with it. You must, must, let me help you, Olive!" Kilgore bent his head, and holding her hand in a grip like iron, he pressed his mouth to it.

Olive got to her feet and tottered. "Jerry, dear, I know, I understand! Don't, don't—" She stood, gathering her strength together. "Jerry, there is —the other hand! I know. I—am glad. Now, let me go, and"—she smiled—"be good!"

He let her go and they stood for a moment, peering into one another's eyes through the shadowy lamplight. "I'll—be good!" he smiled, folding his arms.

Olive moved back till the circle of lamplight fell upon her feet in their old slippers and the hem of her wrapper. "Now, Jerry, you sit in the armchair, and I'll sit in my sewing-chair here," she smiled, laying her hand on a great basket of darning and mending. "Then we'll try to talk it out. You see," she watched him obeying her, his smile like an unruly boy's, "I know that I have just one way, and that is to go on, all the way through. I will tell you—perhaps I should not, but—I *want* to!—that once I very nearly did go to you for help. And I have often thought of it, and knew perfectly that you'd be glad. And you must not tell me again. You see, I've got to that hardest place of all, where kindness just crumples me. I can meet anything hard, but—you just must not be too kind to me. It makes me weak. You see? I could cry now, if I'd let myself. But I know better! To-morrow the headache would be no sham, then I'd be cross with the kiddies. It's hard work, keeping them gay," she said simply. "You'd better go now, Jerry."

"I won't," said Kilgore. "I have more to say."

"Then, you'd better say it!"

"I couldn't stay long. I should be taking you up in my arms and jumping out of your window—"

"And breaking all the precious bones we've got!" she laughed softly. She watched him a moment, her eyes glowing. "I don't know just what to do with you, Jerry. You are like an elephant up in this shabby little room. You do look so strong and well. It's nice to see anyone look like that. We have all grown so dusty and shrunken."

"Olive, be still!" said Kilgore. "You have a way of using terribly simple words! To-night—" he hesitated, glancing away from her, "I told Dick that nothing could make me happier than lending him enough to tide over the time he wants to finish his tragedy. He wouldn't listen to me, but perhaps he will to you. I want you to persuade him. Will you?"

Distress played over her face. "But, Jerry, that would add debt to poverty!"

"Debt—to me?"

"Oh, you bewilder me! You know he is doing—*verse!*"

"I know, dear girl!" They smiled impulsively.

"I think," said Olive, "that borrowing would be very bad for Richard."

"Let me give it to him, then. To you—to the kiddies! I don't care how you do it."

"But you couldn't give us money."

"Your terrible simplicity again!"

"You see, if it were anybody but just *you*, Jerry!"

Kilgore came and stood near her, looking down upon her. "That's bittersweet, Olive!"

"It is," she agreed fully. "I can't argue, I never could. But that is the way of it, isn't it?"

Kilgore shrugged. "I once heard a man say that there is nothing in the world that is more difficult than helping an angel to bacon and eggs. I know now that it is true."

"But, Jerry," she laughed, "I'm not one bit an angel, and I love bacon and eggs, and I am sure I'd not be difficult at all! I love you to want to help me, even to bacon and eggs. But, you see, I know Richard so well. If he were to borrow from you—to whom the money would mean nothing, he'd slip just that much deeper into the habit of being looked after. Don't you think so?"

"You are unanswerable!" Kilgore moved toward his hat and coat. "I'm going. I shall be capable of some mad thing if I stay any longer. I know, dear girl!—don't say it. I'll go. But you must promise me something."

Olive sat watching him, her hands tight together in the folds of her wrapper. She lifted a hand to smooth her hair, but it was shaking and she slipped it back. "I promise. What is it?"

"If things get worse, or if you come to see them differently, Olive, you will come straight to me?"

"I promise, Jerry. Believe me, and be quite at peace about it. Now, won't you please, please go away?" She got to her feet and stood trying to hold her smile steady. "Good night," she said.

Kilgore started toward her, then, brusquely, turned and left her, closing the door after him. She could hear him running down the stairs. She rushed to the door, as if she'd call him back, then she dropped upon the chair where he'd laid his hat and coat, and sat there, wide-eyed, listening, listening, till the door closed far below, and she knew that he was out in the street again. She went to the window and stood, leaning her head against her arm, watching the glow for a long time.

III

Milburn's trembling hands held fast to something inside his tightly buttoned coat. He stood panting against the closed landing door, peering, listening. The place was still, the hour that of evening between early and late, when going is over and coming home not yet begun. He quivered under the lash of his racking cough, then, controlling himself desperately, he crossed the room and listened, close to the bedroom door. Not a sound. He came to the lamp, stood as stiff as death, and his eyes slowly turned to the open window. A terrible smile crinkled over his thin white face, his dry mouth curling back over his teeth. His hand freed itself from the thing he held and mechanically brushed to order his tumbled hair, straightened his tie, passed soothingly other his haggard face. He crouched down to his lamp, and he drew from his coat a gold chain-bag, jewelled and gleaming, and lumpy with treasure. His shaking hands made the jewels gleam again. A noise outside in the night struck him, sent the purse back to cover. He laughed and whispered, "Coward!" in self-derision. Rapidly, he shook the contents out upon his papers. A lace handkerchief, a gold key-ring, several tiny gilded keys jingling softly, two small letters bent together, and a small gold purse. His fingers travelled over the small purse, question burning in his eyes. Great hollows, like scooped out grey shells had settled about his eyes, making their fever of hunger burn again. With a crackling laugh he opened the purse and peered into it. He could not endure the suspense, and laid it down for a moment's respite, his fingers seeking something to do in the folded letters. Without reason, he drew out a letter and glanced over it, read the signature, lifted his brows and laughed. Carefully, he put it back and let his hands pounce again upon the purse. A few coins and a folded bill fell into his hand. He counted, his eyes close to his hand. Pallor whitened to chalk, and clutching at his table, he fell back in his chair, his eyes closed, his jaw dropped as if life had gone. After a moment his great eyes opened and turned with peevish nervousness toward the bedroom door. He felt as if he were dying: why did no one come to help him? His eyes travelled on to the open window, and the glow drove him mad with anger. Rapidly, his mouth drawn in to a fine grey line, he stuffed all the things back into the bag and flung it there upon his papers, where it shone in the lamp-light, the one brilliant spot in the somber room. He rose, he walked to the window. He lifted his arm and shook his fist, then he came back to the center of the room. He lifted his head with a tragic gesture and called sharply, "Olive!"

"Yes, Richard?" Her voice was far, and sleepy.

"Will you come out here?"

"Yes? In a moment—"

Olive came, her eyes deep with sleep, and she moved toward him, mystified. Her glance fell upon the gleaming gold thing by the lamp, and amazed, bewildered, fascinated, she came close and stood peering at the thing. Her color sank and sank, till she was nearly as ghastly as Milburn, and erect, at bay, they stood, looking into one another's eyes.

Milburn's eyes fell first, the furtive shadow of fear crossing them. He put out his hand and touched the edge of her sleeve. She watched him, waited. "Sit in my chair, dear," he whispered, his voice so dry he could scarcely form a word. "Olive, Olive! Strange—it all is!—everything has grown strange!" He paused, gazing past her into his shadowy books. "Two creatures may live together, as you and I have done: may strive and starve together, hope and despair: may have children—and never know one another—never cross that shadow-bridge of personality—Olive, Olive!"

Olive gazed at him, her very soul in her eyes. "Richard," she moved like a sleep-walker, "you are—*ill?*"

He caught at her hand, he covered it with hot kisses, he shivered from head to foot, but always, over his great eyes played the furtive watching. "Perhaps," he whispered, "perhaps I *am* ill. Perhaps I have been ill a long, long time, and we are only just finding it out. Olive, poor Olive!"

She drew her hand away and stood straight, her eyes upon the purse again. Her voice came low, but clear. "If you say my name like that again, I shall—scream!"

Milburn tottered and caught at the back of his chair. A terrible laugh broke from him, and he looked—giving himself no quarter—past her into the glowing sky beyond their window.

"Where did that thing come from?" she demanded, in the same clear voice.

"From the street," he said sharply. He glanced at her like a trapped animal.

Olive watched him, listened to him; and she saw the furtive light and she heard the sham in the cough. She swayed with her own struggle, then, gentle and sweet, her voice came back to her. "Richard, you have been working yourself to death. No one could endure the strain, day and night, at work like yours. I have not slept too well, either, and our life has gone all wrong. Oh, my poor Richard, what, what have you done?"

He fell into his chair and closed his eyes, his face all hard and sharp. "What have I done?" He laughed and coughed, his hand over his mouth, then, direct as a serpent, "Bring your chair here, before me, where we can see one another, once and for all. I'll tell you what I have done!"

Mechanically, she brought her chair and sat before him, her hands clasped tight in her soft wrapper.

He looked her over. "You are tired out, too, aren't you? I suppose it was not being able to endure seeing you so worn out—that and Kilgore's jeers—that drove me to—forget myself, and my dignified position in society!"

"You cannot say that I have not been patient, Richard," Olive pleaded.

"No, I cannot." He paused. "Olive, I want you to take that purse and open it."

"But—"

"Do as I tell you!"

"Must I?"

"Be quick! I am tired."

She put out a hand and took the thing, and dropped it into her lap, clasping her hands again.

"Open it, I tell you!" his anger rasped.

She did as he told her.

"Now, empty the things out and open the little purse, then count the money, and don't be so slow about it. You are driving me mad!"

"One dollar and ninety-three cents," she whispered. "Richard!"

"Really," and Milburn looked into

her eyes, his own aflare, "not worth the stealing, was it?"

"Oh," she choked, "you *are*—mad, Richard!"

"I am not mad. Life has done nothing but kick me, and at last I have kicked back. That is all, my girl! I have kicked back. That I kicked mere air doesn't change any of the facts, except for me. Just more hard luck!"

"Oh—don't, Richard—"

"If," he mocked her, "you say my name like that again, I shall—*scream!*"

"You must go to bed and rest—"

"I am not tired. I wish to talk; to tell you all about it. Sit *still!*" He paused a moment, and she watched and waited. "A man of poetry may scarcely stoop to steal a paltry dollar and ninety-three cents! A crime should be in harmony, should *rhyme—*" he laughed. "If," he went on, "a poet falls, the fall must be far!" A fit of fearful coughing, coughing that she knew was real, was racking him through and through, and he broke at last, let his head fall upon his arms, upon his papers by his lamp, and he cried like a miserable child. "It's all over, Olive! I'm done for!"

Olive rose swiftly, duty possessing her and giving her all of its marvel of detached strength. She bent over him. "Don't do that, Richard! It is all between you and me, buried now, and forever. You'll hurt yourself. You are making yourself cough. I'll sit by you here, with my chair beside you, and you must tell me all about it, and get it off your poor tired mind. And to-morrow—we'll arrange things, get things started over again. We'll forget everything and begin again!"

Milburn's pride quivered under the goad of kindness. "I'm just tired to death," he whispered, "just hounded out! I've slaved. I've clung to my ideals—my poor tattered ideals. They and I are fit companions—beggars walking through that hellish glow! Nobody knows. Nobody cares! Every day, the same heavenly hope; every night the same blank despair! I can't afford to do the one thing that I am gifted to do. That is life. Kilgore came up here to-night and bullied me, kicked the down dog, like the great, strong, disgusting pink-and-yellow animal that he is! He told me—as if I did not know!—that you were tired and shabby. He said that the children looked puzzled! Puzzled! My God, Olive, that was the horrible word he used. Puzzled children! He thinks that I have no right to go on writing poetry, because, even when it does sell, it isn't enough to give you three 'a good time.' He says that you won't have any 'fun' till I come along with him,—with Oakley"—he glanced at the purse and smiled oddly—"and the rest of them: till I turn in and write truck to sell. He said that if I really believed in this thing I am doing—believed in it, Olive!—I'd let him lend me money, so that at least you and the children might be having *fun*—while I worked." He smiled and gave in to the ecstasy of martyrdom, carried away by the rush of his wrongs. "I went out for air—after Kilgore had had the grace to take himself off—and to smoke his little cigar! It was a good cigar, and the night air was like flowers. I walked and walked. I neither knew nor cared where. I was almost at peace. Life was just tricking me! I found myself at a cross-street, a new stone house as ugly as a tomb, at the corner. Just then—life!—the great front door opened, and a man and two women came out. They were in evening clothes, the women gleaming like that purse, and they were laughing and gay. They were having *fun!* A beautiful machine was waiting, and, as they got in, all its lights turned on, I saw that the man was—Oakley! Life was at it—gay, nasty pranks! It was Oakley's house, and one of the women was Oakley's wife. The other was his sister." Milburn's voice grew low and malicious. "I know who it was by those letters in the bag. Intimate, damaging little letters they are! The best of their kind that I have ever seen. There's a fortune of blackmail in them for anyone but a poet! Pranks every-

where, my dear girl! The air is alive with them to-night!" He laughed, crouched down in his great chair, his clothes hanging about him, frail, dreadful, pitiful. "I thought of Oakley's kids—asleep in the quiet, airy upper rooms, with hired women to look after them, in their beds of down and cool linen. I thought of you, tired out, racked with headache—you, and your poor battered hands! Then—the great prank!—as I walked on I stepped on that purse! Oakley's sister will have a bad night, aware of her lost letters! She won't sleep well, even in her beautiful bed!"

Olive's voice, new and strange to her own ears, broke the long, tense moment that followed. "We'll send the purse back in the morning. The first thing. The address on the letters—makes it easy, Richard, to know just to whom it belongs—"

"I believe so," said Milburn tartly.

"I'll attend to it. You need not worry—"

"Thank you," he laughed.

Olive watched him in terror. Her voice was soothing and quiet—so quiet that she had for it a fleeting thought of wonder. "It is all a dreadful dream, Richard. Jerry should not have worried you just now in the midst of your work. He doesn't understand. But I think he cares very much about your welfare: more than you have ever realized. So few *do* understand. I know! But, from to-night on, you must think of nothing but your work. You must finish it: must have absolute peace of mind. I understand—a little. Anyway, I shall not complain. And the children are really very well. Surely, having come so far with you, you know how to count upon me for the rest of the way!"

An ecstatic smile played brilliantly over his sunken face. "The rest of the way! Olive, dear! You were always so wonderful!"

Olive shuddered, but persisted. "I think," she went on, "that perhaps Jerry was right; that perhaps you should borrow enough to see us through. Friendship *must* mean that sort of thing, it seems to me." Her voice fell soft, absent, and she looked at the lamp, and the shadow of a smile crossed her face. "Only—of course, till the work is done—and placed—and paid for!"

A great sigh crept over the room.

"Only all of that?" Milburn smiled.

"You see," said Olive, hurrying on, "it will give you a new faith in yourself, and it will give Jerry a new faith in you, to see that you so believe in yourself that you dare to borrow! You see? It means something already, to be *able* to borrow, Richard! Now you must rest. To-morrow," Olive paused, glanced down upon him, a curious aloofness upon her, "to-morrow you must get up with all of this trouble put away. I—will help you. I will see to everything. I'll send that gold thing back. Then, in the afternoon, when the work is done and the children are playing, I'll go to Jerry and have a long talk with him. I'll 'phone him in the morning—"

Olive was standing back from Milburn's chair, and she looked like a cross of light upon shadowy space—her soft old wrapper, her lifted head and the vague walls, with their rows and piles of old books, about her.

Milburn stared at her as if he had never seen her before. "Old Jerry's always been in love with you, Olive! You could see it fairly shining out of him to-night. The old money-bags! I believe he'd do just about anything for you—"

"I know," said Olive simply.

"You *know?*" Milburn stammered.

Olive lifted her arm to hide the look of him from her eyes; that he might not read her horror of his pretending. "After all, we need very little—"

"Now," and Milburn coughed with irritation, "ask for enough, so that I need not be worried! What does it matter to him?"

Olive got herself across the room and stood leaning against the stained old panels. When she spoke again her voice was completely new and hard.

"It is late, Richard. The one thing that you can't afford is to dissipate your strength. You have nothing now to worry you. Nothing! There is not the slightest doubt that Jerry will only too gladly take care of us. He'd rather do it than anything. He'll do it if I ask him. And I am going to him, to ask him. Come, now; turn out the light and come to bed!" She opened the door cautiously, she lifted a finger to warn him not to waken the children. She disappeared into the room, and in a moment it was diffused with soft light. She came back to the door and, with her hand about the candle-flame, she peered at him. "Come!"

Milburn had risen to his feet and, with both hands resting upon his table, he was looking down upon his papers. He lifted his long, thin arms and gave in to a great nervous yawn, dreadful to see. The hour's wear and tear had been terrible, and his delicate face, with its white forehead, was like a shadow with a chalk-drawn jaw. He opened a drawer in his table and gingerly, with his finger-tips, he shoved the purse till it fell, with soft, rich thud, into the drawer. He shut it away from his sight.

"Do come, Richard. You are wasting your strength absurdly."

Milburn quivered, and anger fell upon him in a storm. "Shut that door, and let me be!"

"But—you'll be ill—"

"Do as I tell you, will you? I want to work *now!* I am—" he laughed, "in the *mood!*"

Fear and sadness divided Olive against herself. She hesitated, then, with a gesture of giving up, she closed the door and left him to his own shattered will.

Alone, as he had demanded to be, rage pelted him, robbed him of the last of his fagged-out reason. His hands quivered over his papers, seized them, tore them to shreds and bits, the pile of white destruction, foaming high there, under the lamp. He laughed softly, emptily, like the purring of an animal over its bleeding prey. Then, with the lilting step of an old man, he went to the window and, with a dramatic toss of his head, looked out between the curtains. A breeze stirred the white stuff and tossed it across his eyes. Irritated, he clutched it, pulled the curtains down, tossed them on the floor behind him. He stood, his hands upon the window frame, peering, peering out. His eyes glowed even as the sky glowed. It was the hour when all the gay world is coming out of the theatres, going to restaurants, or going to feasts and good times at home. He climbed, swift and sure as a cat, out upon the fire-escape and stood, silhouetted against the glow of the wide, high, still sky. Space and the sweet air whispered to him, irresistibly. He lifted his arms to the heavens, where, just above his head, the glow seemed to fall back, where there was a field of deep, still blue, athrill with stars. And, in a moment, he had plunged—was gone—and the glow and the sky above seemed to have swept over and absorbed the frail platform, with its thin iron rail, and it was as if no creature had ever stood there at all.

"Richard, dear," came a voice in the stillness, "*do* come! You'll be *so* tired to-morrow!"



THE first symptom of love is always rebellion against marriage, its inevitable ending.



THE JUDGE

By Alexander Harvey

A GUILTY love! He could long for such a thing—he, a judge, seated at that moment upon the bench, trying a case upon which the fate of a fellow-creature depended!

Philip Long drew the folds of his somber robe of silk more closely about him. He scanned the jury. He looked keenly down into the eyes of the district attorney. That vigilant official had just interrupted a cross-examination at a crucial point. There was an objection by the defense. Philip overruled it, with no very clear notion of what the point had been. The examination of the main witness in that crowded court-room was resumed. The members of the jury stirred uneasily in their seats. Philip leaned back once more in the black robes of his office and fell into his old train of reflection.

An orgy! He had heard of the joy of such a thing. He had read in the lives of the decadent poets of the raptures of the flesh. The kisses of a soft red mouth must indeed be sweet. Men would not otherwise have sold their souls for them. And he had never spent himself in frenzies of that description! Was he not the loser? Had he lived? He wondered.

The somber mind of Philip Long traveled back to the period of his own admission to the bar. He recalled next the day of his wedding. Muriel became his—Muriel the cold, the untender, the hateful. For his wife *was* hateful to him. He allowed his thought to dwell for a moment upon his little son. Him, at least, he loved. He pondered next the thrill that was his when first he took his seat upon the bench.

Again the details of the trial going on below broke in upon this reverie. Counsel for the defense was creating the discord now. Philip decided another point vacantly. He was a man in a dream. He noted the taking of an exception. He realized guiltily that he might be reversed on appeal in the court above. But the thing was done. He let it pass. Once more he plunged into the deep, deep stream of his besetting reflections.

A woman and her arms! He knew the lips of women, the lips of even bought women, were sweet. What did it all amount to, this career of his, that left him old and spent at forty-three? There was a great world of love, and he had never explored it. How he longed for a little knowledge, though it were ever so dire a thing! His yesterday had been as the day before. His tomorrow would be as was his yesterday. Breakfast with cold and calculating Muriel. Court at ten-thirty. The examination of innumerable talesmen, the arraignment of wretches harried by deputy marshals into pleas of guilty, the trials for counterfeiting, the indictments for smuggling, the sentences to be imposed upon thieving letter-carriers— "Bah!" he said to himself, conning the calendar of this school of crime. How he had envied a young poet at dinner a few evenings since, the young poet whose verses were repeated by red lips, whose brilliance made him the admiration of women! The judge had listened to talk of silk, of sonnets, of poets and of passion. He had seen a cigarette between a pair of perfumed lips. These things were all in a world he saw and was not of. Slim waists were in that world, and bare

arms and the swirl of skirts and the exchange of subtle glances.

A passion? Yes! He would give the high place he had won for that, all that. He had in mind no vulgar hideous dissipation. That was what ruined the lives of men he had again and again sentenced to the federal penitentiary. It was the poetry of sin for which he longed, not because it was sin but for the sake of the fleetness of the slippered feet, for the sake of the dancing in swift abandon—ah, that dancing, dancing, dancing! Was he not a pagan, after all, Philip Long wondered, as the cross-examination of the obstinate witness dragged and dragged; was he not a pagan, after all, and was not the Calvinistic theology he had imbibed in the home of pious parents a mockery of his soul?

And by this time the court had adjourned. Until the following Monday the fate of the prisoner would be in the balance. Philip retreated to his chambers. He retained but a nebulous impression of the trend of all the evidence. As he laid aside his robe, he remembered Muriel. She had been summoned that very morning to the bedside of her invalid mother. He was doomed, then, to another solitary dinner at the club. Yet he thanked his gods at being quit of her for a night.

A profound loathing for the routine of this existence of his filled the whole soul of Philip Long as he walked down the steps of the post office above which his courtroom was located. He was conscious of powers which must have won him renown in literature or in the arts. His was the poet's temperament. His romanticism left him so horribly out of tune! He was out of tune with the concert of this life that he hated.

Philip was, truth to tell, what is known to the bar as a vacation judge. He needed the slightest pretext only and he had adjourned his court, a federal one, in a great State. Lawyers who discovered that he was sitting had no sooner arranged to revive their buried cases than lo! Philip was off again to his beloved Italy. There he pored over Dante with a priest on the island of Capri. Suitors complained. Philip regretted only that Shelley had died so young.

There was still time for Philip to catch an afternoon train for New York. That would just bring him to the play he had long wished to see there. He found himself in a dining car before he quite realized how swiftly he was speeding to the metropolis, before he had quite realized the purpose in his mind. The food set before him had a singular relish. He gazed with a sense of exhilaration at the solid New Jersey landscape—such a contrast, he thought with a sigh, to Italy and Spain. He traced the lightness of his spirits to the escape from Muriel. Did he detest her, he asked himself, because she was part and parcel of his American life? All things American, he reflected wistfully, were so drab and drear and dull. Why had not his lot been cast in Vienna, where were dances and love and women with twinkling ankles?

II

An accident to the engine had caused too much delay to make the theater possible when Philip found himself in New York at last. He strolled idly through thoroughfares saturated with electric streams. He turned into Sixth Avenue aimlessly, falling into a smarter gait as he neared the resort of which, in a subtle sense, he felt the spell. There was many a bright light. A giant of a great gold sign burned above the portal. The place was to outward seeming a saloon of the most American ugliness. Philip pushed open a swinging door. He saw an obese lounger at a table. Philip walked boldly to the bar. He dared not hesitate. Whiskey was put in front of him, silently, sullenly. The bartender was white, mute, oblivious. A sonata, opening with a melodious subject, stated and repeated again and again, delighted the ear of Philip as the strong liquor flowed from the glass down his throat. There was music in a room below the winding

staircase that made a well beyond the barroom.

Philip was not making his first visit to this resort. He had formed one of an exploring party of sociologists in the neighborhood weeks before. Those reminiscences of Brahms and Grieg of which the sonata seemed built up as it caught his ear again drew him to the flight of little steps the moment he had paid for his drink. He had an embarrassed consciousness that the eyes of many women were scanning him keenly as he emerged into the warm light of a long room. With the boldness that only a timid man can show, Philip walked down a lane formed by tables and chairs. An aproned waiter in a black coat was bearing little glasses on a tray. A yellow-haired youth thrummed the sonata he had heard above. All about, at long tables, sat women. Some were little, some were big; but to the flushed lids of Philip just then they seemed innumerable, multitudinous, a field of women whose heads swayed and drooped and rose like the ten thousand daffodils stretched in the poet's never-ending line.

He had seated himself at a little round table in a corner before his blurred vision adjusted itself to the lights, the glasses, the smoke. He looked into the round red nose of a waiter for half a minute before it occurred to him to bespeak a highball and a cigar. Philip was wondering if by any chance he had been recognized. His features were familiar to thousands in his native city. In New York he was a stranger. The fact proved a consolation until he reflected upon the possibility that one of his neighbors might at that very moment be visiting the metropolis.

A scherzo that promised well when it began at the piano was degenerating into a commonplace trio when Philip's whiskey and cigar were placed upon the little table before him. He dropped a quarter into the palm of the respectful waiter as a tip. It had become obvious that this resort was not patronized by the wealthy. Indeed, the women—they were far fewer than Philip had supposed at first—had an oddly respectable look. They were neither young girls nor middle-aged. The dresses were inconspicuous. The poverty of each was obvious. Philip glanced now and then into a pair of eyes. He received an occasional smile. One or two men were ordering drinks for female companions. A street door would open at intervals for the admission of one more woman or one more man.

The long waist of a woman dressed in black was outlined to Philip's eye by the yellow of the wall against which she reclined. She had met his look once or twice without flinching but without a smile. He studied the oval face, the straight nose, the black and distinct brows. She leaned slightly forward, her dark eye seeking his furtively, without rapture. Those thin, curved lips had sold their kisses too many times. Hers was the one face in the room that bore the sorrow of the world. As he told himself so much, their glances met again.

Instinctively, she made room for him at her side. Philip, no less instinctively, crossed the floor. An uncanny sense that he was doing now what he had done long, long ago made the voice with which he asked her to drink with him seem wavering and weak in his own ears. She gave an order to the waiter coldly, quietly, yet commandingly, like a figure in one of Philip's dreams of yesterday come true. Could this be Semiramis, reincarnate from her rosy tomb, or the queen of Herod's passion? This place, these persons were all so uncannily familiar. Surely the poet lies who says the snows of yesteryear are blown away utterly. They may melt but they form new clouds for new winters to scatter. Was he not seated beside Phryne now or Thaïs or great Dido, a lover she had lost and mourned in ages past returning to the unforgotten face? What poet dare affirm that Helen's lips are dust when a man like Philip Long revels in the treasure of a woman's tresses?

He was stunned by the freedom with which her spirit came to him. She lived alone, she confessed. There was a raciness in the attitude that caught his fancy strangely. He had paid for her wine and had made mental note of a street and number she gave him before he rose to go. Slowly he walked down the long lane of tables, looking neither to right nor to left. The night air was in his face when it occurred to him that there was nothing wanton in her eyes — nothing more terrible than her coolness. He strolled slowly through a side street, wondering whether it might not be best to abandon this adventure. But he did not go from the house she had indicated. He stood beside it, indeed, under a broken moon, as her figure emerged darkly in the doorway. She held it open and he passed in.

There was a subtlety unspeakable in her instant comprehension of his need of her. There was a fearlessness in this woman that fascinated while it daunted him. She was demure, pensive, incurious regarding himself. Despite his determination to eliminate the element of a too mutual confidence Philip's curiosity got the better of him.

"Are your parents living?"

He had had the grace of his hour before that question was put, and now sat sipping a cup of coffee she made for him with pitiful hands.

She fixed large, black eyes upon his and bowed her head in silence. Philip was smoking a cigarette. It had grown very late.

"What part of the country are you from?"

She named a small town well known to Philip. It happened to be within his own judicial district. There was an inscrutability about this woman which made it difficult to determine whether she lied or spoke the truth. He tried to put his next question as considerately as possible. It was a point he had often broached to himself.

"And how," he began, his voice wavering in spite of himself, "and how did you—ah—come to—"

He was not able to complete the query, but she understood.

"A man married me," was her quiet explanation, "and brought me to New York."

Philip seemed to comprehend all at once why her face showed its touch of sorrow.

"What was his name?"

"I never knew," she answered simply. "He was a stranger when he came among us. He married me under an assumed name and—made me what I am."

She went on with her knitting. Philip was more than ever baffled by the calmness of the countenance bent over the needles. If she did not speak the truth, she must be a subtle actress, he reflected.

"Have you never gone back to your people?"

She parted her lips quickly. Then she thought better of her words and the thin, curved mouth closed firmly.

"I have never gone back to my people," she observed at last. Her tone was composed, even. Philip had been impressed from the very first by the correctness of her speech. She used no slang.

III

This was but the first of many meetings of Philip with Lily. He lost no time, upon his return home, in an investigation of her antecedents. The inquiry had to be conducted discreetly. He was not surprised to find her story true in essentials. After all, he reflected one day, as he sat idly upon the bench during a long cross-examination, there was nothing improbable in what Lily had told him. Nor had she any manifest reason for lying. His study of her character—and it had a perennial interest for him—enabled him to perceive that she lacked constructiveness of imagination. Her truthfulness might, then, be no more than a lack of the capacity for invention. It might be an aspect of that lack of coyness which delighted him in her and made her such a contrast by comparison with

Muriel. Philip's wife enraged him with her assumptions of dignity standing upon its own defense. Lily was submission itself—a submissiveness so tender that it seemed at times almost conjugal. With Lily he had the ecstasy of feeling himself understood. Because she understood him, Lily would not lie to him.

"And do you like me?"

He had asked Lily that once. He knew that his own wife did not like him. She was willing enough to meet him at dinner, willing enough to share the social position he had brought her. The strain of marriage she found intolerable, and showed that frankly. Lily withheld nothing. Philip wondered if she cared for him. When he had put the question, she spoke with the calmness of a woman who has learned subtlety from misfortune.

"I like you," was all she said, "because you are a gentleman."

There was a world of confession in the sigh with which the words were spoken. Lily, Philip reflected, did not love him. Perhaps no woman could love such a nature as his. He forebore to pursue the theme. His mind was, indeed, troubled by a new complication. He had ascertained, weeks since, the identity of the man who made her what she was. He was a typical product of New York's East Side, a prosperous and flagrant *souteneur*. There was every possibility that he would be caught in the toils of the law. He had been indicted, in fact, under a federal statute. Philip longed, with an eagerness of which he was at times ashamed, for the apprehension of this fellow. He was known to the denizens of the world he dominated by an Americanized form of his half-Oriental name—Iffey. It was to this monster, Philip reflected savagely, that Lily had in time past given all that was noblest in herself. Hers had been a complete and selfless love—the soul within her soul. She could never experience such a sentiment for Philip. What was virginal and confiding in her spirit's essence had been too coarsened for any fresh seizure of the first rapture of the heart. This reflection made it difficult to conceal his anger when a deputy marshal attached to his own court returned unserved a warrant issued for the notorious Iffey. He thrust the paper into one of his pockets, resolving to consult a skilled private detective. Then he caught a train for New York. He had an appointment with Lily.

She had disconcerted him of late by her requests for money. The sums were not large. Lily had been reared in the simplicity of a decayed lumber town of Pennsylvania. Five dollars was to her a considerable sum. Philip had opened her eyes widely once by a present of fifty dollars. He was in easy circumstances himself. His position on the federal bench had afforded him ample opportunity to swell his personal resources by timely investment, and he had been a judge nearly ten years. He had made no revelation of his identity to Lily. She accepted him incuriously as her "friend." Lily knew that Philip was a gentleman. She adjusted herself accordingly. Between the princess and the washerwoman, Nordau has said, there is little difference. "The groom who by favor of the empress is made Duke of Curlandia will smell of the stable all his life, but the sergeant's daughter become countess and mistress of a royal heart will, after a few months, or sometimes after a few weeks, differ in no respect from the grand lady born to figure in the Almanach de Gotha." Philip had come across that sentence once. It explained to him why the transition from Muriel to Lily became so easy. His wife did not seem more of a lady in the end than did Lily.

"I wonder," Lily remarked, as she handed him a cup of coffee that night—"I wonder if you could—"

She hesitated. Philip had resolved that she should sit against his feet. He would pay for the mood he wished her to sustain, he said to himself, with a pang. After all, he bought Muriel her dresses, her rings, her hats only to find her repudiating the bargain. He drew

some yellow bills from his wallet and laid them with a smile in Lily's lap.

"I would gladly give you more," was his quiet remark, as she counted the money. "Unfortunately I—"

"You are very good to me," was her no less quiet comment. "I would not have asked you for anything, only—"

Again she hesitated to complete a sentence. A sudden curiosity seized him.

"You don't want this for yourself?"

She met his glance frankly.

"Of course not. I would never dream of asking *you* for money for myself."

He watched her with unfeigned curiosity as she opened a bureau drawer and bestowed the money within it. She had extracted an old photograph of the cheapest type from a paper box and was inspecting it critically. Without further words, she placed the bit of cardboard in Philip's hands. He recognized at once the face of the man for whom he had himself issued a bench warrant days before. The judge scanned the plastered hair, the great stickpin in the necktie and the thin jaws of a sinister countenance upon which the camera had had no mercy. As Lily took the picture from his hand, Philip heard her murmur:

"That's Iffey, poor fellow. He wants money to get away with. The police are after him. Why can't they mind their own business?"

Philip drew a cigar from its case before he made any remark.

"I thought, Lily, this was the man who—who married you!"

"That's just it," she observed quietly. "A woman like me can't turn down the man who brings back old times, can she?"

Then in a flash, it was borne in upon Philip that, after all, the despised scoundrel had brought to Lily the supreme earthly gift a woman is capable of receiving from the hands of whatever gods there be. The miserable Iffey had given the youthful Lily all the ecstasy of her first love. Could she taste in Heaven itself a bliss more seraphic; could she thrill in the very presence of the Maker of all joy with an ecstasy so fine? And he, Philip, had brought none of this in the casket of gifts with which he came into the life of Lily. He brought money and the tenderness of a heart that had spent itself—nothing more! Iffey was the real Prince Charming. He had brought her love's Paradise—for a time! And as Philip pondered, he found himself lighting the cigar between his teeth with the warrant from his pocket.

"No," he agreed, as it flashed upon him that even the cold Muriel had been to him once all that Cleopatra was to Antony, "we all return to our first love."

FROM THE SONGS OF KAO HSÜ C'HI

I

OLD indeed is that man, and frozen by bleak years, who cherisheth not in his heart a lane set with larch trees, and one walking there in the evening, and the sadness of an old sweet air.

II

I was in those days a magistrate eminent in two provinces, and terrible to evil-doers. I am today an ancient rogue brought to book at last, and dragged trembling before judge and headsman.

III

Say when I am gone that I loved the green hills, and the birds of the valley, and the dark pool where the little river bends. Say that I knew the love of soft-voiced, dark-eyed maidens. Say that I died in the purple glory of Autumn, with the wild geese winging to the south.

LA PETITE FÉE

By Clément Rochel

UN matin, trois petits hommes quittèrent le village et prirent ensemble le chemin du bourg.

Ce n'était point là un fait extraordinaire; ils faisaient ce trajet chaque jour pour se rendre à l'école. Mais, ce matin-là, il devait arriver à l'un d'eux une aventure surprenante. . . .

Ces trois petits hommes étaient bien grands, chacun, comme une botte de gendarme, et comptaient bien dans les vingt ans d'âge à eux trois.

Bordant la route, il y avait un petit bois, terrible à traverser la nuit, mais frais et charmant quand le soleil l'éclairait, tamisé par la ramée. Et dans ce bois, il y avait beaucoup de mûres sauvages, de prunelles et de merises, selon la saison; ce qui faisait que nos trois petits bonshommes partaient toujours longtemps avant l'heure de la classe, afin de pouvoir buissonner dans le bois sans crainte d'arriver en retard.

Ce matin-là, donc, comme ils s'étaient avancés dans les fourrés, un peu plus que de coutume, ils apercurent au pied d'un chêne une pauvre vieille qui paraissait avoir au moins cent ans. . . Elle était assise sur la mousse et versait des larmes grosses comme des gouttes d'orage, en murmurant avec des sanglots dans la voix:

—On m'a pris ma béquille, et je ne puis plus marcher! On m'a pris ma béquille. . . Qui me la rendra?

* * *

L'un des trois petits hommes, le plus petit, ma foi, s'approcha de la vieille:

Pauvre vieille mère, lui dit-il, qui donc vous a pris votre béquille? Voulez-vous que je coupe un bâton d'épine ou de cornouiller pour vous soutenir?

—Mon petit ami, vous êtes bien obligeant, répondit la vieille. Mais c'est ma béquille qu'il me faudrait. Je ne peux marcher qu'avec cellelà.

—Pardi, la vieille, répartit l'un des deux autres, vous nous la bâillez belle! . . . Une béquille en vaut une autre! Et puisque vous refusez celle qu'on vous offre, attendez que celle qu'on vous a prise revienne!

—Allons aux mûres! dit le troisième.

Et les trois petits hommes s'éloignèrent dans la direction du bourg.

Cependant, le plus petit des trois petits hommes sentit qu'il n'agissait pas bien.

Et, tout en s'éloignant de la pauvre vieille—une idée sans doute!—il trouve que les mûres avaient goût d'amertume.

Aussi, le soir, au retour de l'école, il laissa ses deux compagnons revenir seuls au village et passa vers le bois.

Il retrouva la vieille qui n'avait pas bougé, et, comme elle avait soif, il courut à une source voisine et lui apporta à boire.

—Pauvre vieille mère, lui dit-il alors, savez-vous où l'on a emporté votre béquille? Je vais aller vous la chercher. . .

La vieille eut un sourire qui fit grimacer ses rides, et répondit.

—Vous êtes un bien petit homme pour affronter les périls qui vous séparent de ma béquille. . . Et puis, vos parents seront inquiets en ne vous voyant pas revenir avec vos camarades. . .

—Personne ne s'inquiétera de moi, car je suis orphelin.

—Tiens! c'est comme moi! fit la vieille.

Le petit homme pensa qu'une centenaire avait bien le droit d'être orpheline, mais il ne le dit point, car il savait que si l'on doit toujours penser ce que l'on dit, il est bon, quelquefois, de ne pas dire tout ce que l'on pense. . .

—Oui, répartit la vieille. Je suis sans famille, et c'est pour cela que l'on m'a pris ma béquille. . . Ah! si je la retrouvais! . . .

—Je vais aller vous la chercher.

La vieille, soutenue par le petit homme, fit quelques pas, clopin-clopant, banbi-banban; et, lui désignant un sentier dans l'épaisseur du bois:

—C'est là-bas, là-bas, dit-elle, au plus profond de l'ombre, que l'on a emporté ma béquille. . . Vous verrez un vieux château où il n'y a aucune lumière et dont toutes les portes battent au vent. . . Vous monterez au plus haut de la plus haute tourelle, et, dans une chambre plus noire que les ténèbres, vous la trouverez si vous la cherchez bien. . . Mais, peut-être, mon petit ami, que vous ne reviendrez pas. . . Car l'ombre est traîtresse . . . et le bois est terrible. . .

—Attendez-moi ici, pauvre vieille mère. . .

Et le petit homme, qui n'était pas plus haut qu'une botte de gendarme, s'en fut et disparut dans l'obscurite des arbres et de la nuit qui venait. . .

Il marcha longtemps, longtemps. . .

Enfin, il aperçut le vieux château, qui ressemblait à un immense tombeau en ruines. Ainsi que l'avait dit la vieille, tout y était noir; les fenêtres et les portes en étaient ouvertes, et l'on entendait aux environs le vol des corbeaux et le hululement des hiboux. . .

Mais le petit homme n'eut pas peur.

Il pénétra dans le manoir, gravit l'escalier de la haute tourelle et, les mains étendues dans les ténèbres, il fouilla la chambre la plus sombre.

Enfin, il trouva la béquille. . .

Plus rapide encore qu'en allant, il revint vers l'endroit où il avait laissé la vieille, en criant de toutes ses forces:

—Je l'ai trouvée! . . . La voici!

* * *

Alors, il se passa une chose merveilleuse. . .

Sa béquille à la main, la vieille se mit à marcher, à courir comme à quinze ans, entraînant avec elle le petit homme. . .

Bientôt, celui-ci revit la château qui, tout à coup, s'éclaira de toutes ses fenêtres et de toutes ses portes. . .

Le petit homme et la vieille femme entrèrent dans une vaste chambre étincelante de cristaux et de dorures et où des milliers de glaces multipliaient à l'infini l'éclat des lumières. . .

—Regarde! dit ensuite la vieille, en élevant sa béquille.

Aussitôt, la pauvre, banbi-banban, clopin-clopant, se métamorphosa. Sa béquille devint un sceptre d'or enrichi de diamants, et elle-même se transforma en une jolie princesse toute mignonne et couverte de dentelles et de pierreries—une petite femme pas plus haute qu'une botte de gendarme, qui, prenant le petit homme par la main, l'emmena proche d'une petite table servie de bonnes choses, parmi lesquelles des mûres sauvages, des prunelles et des merises, qui n'avaient pas goût d'amertume. . .

* * *

On sut plus tard que la vieille femme n'était autre que la fille du roi, la petite fée Topaze qui, bientôt, va remettre entre les mains du petit homme, devenu grand, la béquille merveilleuse, c'est-à-dire le sceptre du roi, son père.



THE chief trouble with flappers nowadays is that they are over-educated and under-dressed.



MYTHS OF MOMUS

By George Jean Nathan

ON the evening of August 16, inst., two farces were presented in the Republic Theater: one upon the stage, by Mr. Lawrence Rising and Miss Margaret Mayo; the other in the lobby, by several of the gentlemen whose profession it is to review the metropolitan dramaturgy. Of the two, the latter proved immeasurably the more jocund.

The farce upon the stage of the theater, dubbed "His Bridal Night," had as its theme the ancient caprice of mistaken identity; the farce in the lobby as its, the equally ancient caprice as to the incredibility and hence dubious theatrical practicableness of that theme.

The abounding persistence in contemporaneous circles of this phantasm, the notion that mistaken identity is too hollow a stratagem whether in actuality or in fancy to serve feasibly the amusement platform, obscures by its avoirdupois even the manifold beefy sister hallucinations that befool the Anglo-Saxon playhouse. And yet, as with the rest, what is there in it? The theater itself was born out of an acceptance by its audience of the legitimacy of the theme. For, as any schoolboy or graduate student of the theater at Harvard College can tell, the leading impulse given by Thespis to the drama (*circa* 536 B. C.) consisted in the adding to Dionysus' old dithyrambic chorus of a single actor who appeared successively in different roles and who—as we discover in at least two suggestive instances—convinced his spectators even when he mistook *himself* for someone else!

From the very beginnings of the theater to the present time, the theme of mistaken identity, against which the critical prejudice habitually waxes spoofish, has, whenever at all well handled, been a prosperous one. From 200 B. C. and the "Menaechmi" of Plautus (probably the first definite elaboration of the theme) to its appropriation in the sixteenth century in "A History of Errors" and from its subsequent reappropriation by Shakespeare in his "Comedy of Errors" to (in the early eighteenth century) its re-reappropriation in "Les Ménechmes" of Regnard—and through innumerable French, German and British farces of the nineteenth century "Pink Dominoes" order to such pasties of more recent years as the music show "Three Twins" and the motion picture serial "The Iron Claw," the mixed identity story has been a cajoling and lucrative theatrical ware. I doubt whether, with the single exception of Molnar in "Der Gardeoffizier" ("Where Ignorance is Bliss"), there has been an instance where a skilled writer has failed to make money out of the whimsy. And even so, Molnar, though his play was too subtle to capture the Anglo-Saxon showgoer, gained an ample concrete reward for his use of the idea in his native Austria-Hungary. The theme, indeed, has in its many ways proved not less generally captivating, for all one hears to the contrary, than the Cinderella business. Whether handled by Mark Twain in "The Prince and the Pauper" or by Katherine Cecil Thurston in "The Masquerader" or by Anthony Hope in "A Prisoner of Zenda," it has ever resulted in a best seller. Whether handled by William Gillette in "Too Much Johnson" or by Ludwig Fulda in "The Twin Sister" or by Shakespeare in "Twelfth Night," it has ever resulted in entertainment.

The current notion, therefore, that any theatrical piece having mixed identity as its thesis is a piece destined at once to be an ennui brewery and a dangerous theatrical investment is akin to the like current romance that good dialogue and lyrics are necessary to the success of a musical comedy. Beyond question, the best stage producer of the music show amongst us is Mr. Julian Mitchell—the best and the most successful artistically and commercially. And why is Mr. Mitchell the best and the most successful artistically and commercially? Simply because Mr. Mitchell is deaf as a post and so, being constitutionally unable to hear the lines or lyrics at rehearsals, pays utterly no attention to them and devotes his entire eye to the physical elements of the business in hand.

The first theory held by protestants against the theme of mixed identity is that mixed identity is too strainful upon the imagination, too singular and grotesque a conceit, to capture the conviction of a native theater audience. . . . Yet this same theater audience willingly takes for granted that no Frenchwoman loves her husband, that all bachelors habitually don dinner jackets even when anticipating a quiet evening alone in their apartments, that no woman is ever successful in hiding her past from the man she marries, that forests always grow in grooves and that falling snow never clings to any portion of a man's overcoat other than the shoulders!

The second theory is that the confusions of identity under the majority of circumstances exhibited upon the stage are in actuality impossible and so constitute poor meat for drama. But since the thesis of mixed identities is nine times in ten employed for mere purposes of loud farce—for mere slapstick pastime, as it were—it is as unreasonable to register such criticism as it would be analogously to urge against the slapstick itself that it is theatrically unfunny since in real life one is not accustomed to apply it abaft one's neighbour. The most amusing things of the farcical stage are and ever have been things entirely out of key with life and nature. Farce moves in a fantastic world, for in the fantastic reposes ever the largest mirth. The mugging mask of the roguish slave which filled the audiences at the "Adelphi" of Terence with loud chuckles, centuries later had the same effect even on the austere August Wilhelm Schlegel, so he admits, when he saw the piece produced in Weimar under the direction of Goethe.

From the innavigable yet compelling drolleries of Aristophanes to the wild casuistries of Etienne Girardot in "Charley's Aunt," from the so-called rope-dancings of Molière to the broken mirror scene in "My Friend from India" or the self-confessed madnesses of "Officer 666," the improbable and the comic are ever closely related. Too, aside from farce the argument against such a theme as mistaken identity is equally ethereal. There is no more good reason why this theme, even granting its intrinsic dubiousness, should because of this intrinsic dubiousness fail to capture the interest of a theater auditorium than there is in a like possible contention against the validity of the ghost in "Hamlet" or the lighted cigar by means of which Mr. Gillette effects his escape from the gashouse in "Sherlock Holmes." It is, surely, as difficult to believe in ghosts as it is to grant that a lighted cigar would retain its vivid glow long enough to deceive the agents of Moriarty.

The third, and final, theory. To wit, that mistaken identity is a story too old longer to beguile or divert the modern time audience. This one of the convenient bespeakings of indolent criticism. And at bottom, obviously, nonsense. The older a theme the more certain, as everyone professionally connected with a box-office well knows, its drawing power. The fact that this very farce, "His Bridal Night," of which we are here writing, is in certain directions (twin sisters, et cetera) basically like the ancient "Bacchis Sisters" which Plautus cabbaged from Menander three centuries before the birth of Christ does

not per se argue against its box-office magnetism any more than has the age of the idea of Mr. George V. Hobart's "Experience" (fifteenth century and, specifically, the morality "Bien-Avisé et Mal-Avisé") or the age of the theme of Molnar's "The Devil" (the twenty-sixth Coventry Play) or the age of the idea of the Washington Square Players' pantomime of the foods inside the human stomach ("La Condamnation des Banquets," written by Nicolas de la Chesnaye four hundred years and more ago) or the age of the idea of the fire effect in a recent Winter Garden show (*vide* the fire scene as recorded in accounts of "The Prophets," acted inside a church in the early years of the twelfth century)—any more, as I say, than has the age of any of these menaced their respective ticket-racks. The mistaken identity theme is not a bit older than the theme of the Pixley-Luders musical comedy "Woodland" (the "Birds" of Aristophanes, 414 B. C.) which ran in New York for six months and is still making money in the less country-jake districts.

These myths of Momus, how loudly tinkle the little bells upon their gaudy caps!

This particular farce, "His Bridal Night," handles its venerable plot substance but indifferently well. The second act shows clearly the hand of Miss Mayo and is the least rusty of the three. The roles of the twin sisters are occupied by a dancing team known as the Dolly Sisters.

II

Mr. J. Hartley Manners' newest play, "The Wooing of Eve," currently on tap in cities to the windward and serving as a conveyance for Miss Laurette Taylor, is a sweetly banal business in which the several male characters' leading duty is alternately to face Miss Taylor and announce that a good woman is the inspiration of whatever noble work is done in the world. The technic of the play is of that familiar order which consumes the time up to within five minutes of the final curtain in laboriously preventing the inevitable happy ending. Saving a nicely written and pleasantly performed little love scene in the first act, the effort discloses nothing of distinction. Mr. Manners' viewpoint is the purely stagey viewpoint of the period of the Victorian theater. And his sentimentality perspires with a virtuosity excelled not even by Sydney Grundy in his prime.

III

Estimating the work charitably from the indulgent viewpoint of the Broadway theatrical criticism, Mr. Roi Cooper Megrue's play "Seven Chances," lighted and figged out by Mr. Belasco, is a poor thing at best. Drawn from a short story by Mr. Gouverneur Morris, in turn drawn from spigots innumerable fore and aft Hoyt's "A Black Sheep," the procedure concerns itself with the matronly fiction of the young man who must wed by a certain hour to gain a rich inheritance—a fiction as familiar to the easy chair and auditorium eye as the fable of the man who, after dancing and conversing with a masked lady for several hours at a great ball and kissing her in the conservatory, still fails to recognize the party as his own wife.

This patriarchal tale Mr. Megrue has maneuvered with little cunning, nor has he fetched thereto any particular wit nor sauce. The technical treatment of the play is suggestive of the German farce comedy school of a decade and more ago: the unfolding of the plot through the repeated introduction of characters in sets of two. The monotony of this device is largely hostile even to the best of stories, as witness Fulda's "Friends of Our Youth." What then must it be to so stereotyped a tale as that adopted by Mr. Megrue? Added to this, there is in the play the usual dosage of fruity Broadwayisms in the shape of loving allusions to Mother; the girl who, though she loves him, rejects a man because he is wealthy; the stock market that breaks the wrong way

at the critical moment; the country club in late springtime with the servants elegantly dressed in butlers' town winter clothes; and such like pearls.

Mr. Belasco's physical staging of the play is fortunately bereft of most of that gentleman's erstwhile hocus-pocus and Mr. Frank Craven and Miss Carroll MacComas are respectively droll and seemly in the central parts.

IV

The popular Mr. Charles Chaplin's latest motion picture exploit—to the day of this writing—bears the title "One A. M." and is a still further testimonial to the amazing, if primitive, versatility of the fellow as a low comedian. A touch of Chaplin now and again is a serviceable diversion against the laboured unfunninesses of the posturing mimic artists of Broadway. He is, however, to be taken in small doses, like a few leaves of an artichoke or a sip of Vieille Cure. Too much of him dulls the palate, impairs the taste. And yet, for all the splendour of the fellow's estate in this fair republic, it is but true that not only is he not nearly so good a *comique* as his brother, Mr. Sidney Chaplin (whose "The Plumber" is by all odds and including even "The Birth of a Nation" the most adroitly conceived and cleverly executed motion picture story thus far revealed to the public—I offer here less my personal and very largely unsubstantial opinion of such things than a consensus of more authentic judgments) but, more, not nearly so genuinely happy a pantaloon as several unidentified and tough-bottomed fellows who cavort through the so-called Keystone screen comedies directed by a Mr. Mack Sennett.

This Sennett is probably the most fecund inventor and merchant of the slapstick masque the civilized world has yet seen. A spectator of but a very few of his *opera*, I am yet fascinated and not inconsiderably bewildered by the resourceful imagination of the fellow. An erstwhile chorus man in the Casino music shows, Sennett has done the work he set out to do with a skill so complete, with a fertility so copious, that he has graduated himself as the foremost bachelor of custard-pie arts, the foremost professor of the bladder. He is, in short, the very best entrepreneur of low comedy the amusement world has known. He has made probably twice as many millions laugh as have all of Shakespeare's clowns and all the music show comedians on earth rolled together. And laughter knows no caste, no altitude of brow.

I do not know whether this Sennett imagines all his scenarios. But whether he imagines them all or only a few, whether a portion of the credit goes to his scrivening staff or not, Sennett himself is without doubt the inspirational spring. There is more loud laughter in his picture showing the fire-hose-flooded house with the bathtub containing a chiclet working loose from its moorings and starting on a mad career down the stairs, out the door and down the turbulent gutters to the Pacific Ocean, and with the populace in avid pursuit, than there is in an hundred farces by Brandon Thomases. And there is as large an intestinal glee in his picture showing the simoomish windstorm blowing the nocturnal pedestrian into a strange house and into a strange bed already occupied by the person of a sweet one as there was in a single serious drama by the late Steele Mackaye.

These Sennett things, too, must, of course, be used sparingly. One can no more endure them often—every week, say—than one could endure every week a new book of Ade's fables in slang or a new farce by Bernard Shaw. It is the nature of such things—excellent as they individually are—that their zest departs when approached too frequently. But a farce by Shaw or a fable by Ade or a seat-of-the-pants sonata by Sennett is each in itself a distinctive, albeit remotely related, work of art—and it is the same blindness that for so long failed to recognize the true artist in Ade that now fails to recognize the true artist in this man Sennett.

V

For the abattoirs of the English language known as crook plays, with their disquisitions on "bulls," "guys," "swag," "spilling the beans," "copping the kale" and the like, my ear is a not particularly genial host. Their initial novelty long since gone, little remains to them, so far as I am able to make out, save now and again a homœopathic flash of theatric ingenuity in the maneuvering of a melodramatic situation or the brewing of a farcical comment. Beyond this, the affairs are pretty much the same: the vulgar woman crook who masquerades as a *grande dame* (the stage notion of a *grande dame* being a big bosom, gray hair and a lorgnette), the crook who is full of pithy sarcasms and the beautiful, heroic crook who seizes the centre of the platform in the middle of the play and defends his profession in three hundred words of fine writing embracing references to the trusts, John D. Rockefeller and François Villon.

These old bacteria, accompanied by the pocket flashlight, the safe hidden in the wall behind the sliding panel, the fifty-thousand-dollar pearl necklace, the smashing of the window-pane, and the motion for silence and stealthy peeking out of the door to determine whether anyone is listening, are with us once more in "Cheating Cheaters," by Mr. Max Marcin and upon the elevation in the Eltinge Theater. They are incorporated into a story somewhat like that narrated by the late O. Henry in "Shearing the Wolf" (observe also the similarity in the titles), a story of malefactor versus malefactor. Mr. Marcin has stirred his materials with some sagacity and deftness and in at least two scenes has exercised a broad humour that is agreeable. He has, in addition, been dexterous in so juggling his story that its intrinsic repetitions and repercussions are made to seem much less obvious than they would at first glance appear. And, probably for everyone like myself whose pulse remains supine before such *contes*, there are several hundred who regard them with a feeling of pleasant perturbation. I'm sure I don't know. To such persons, however, Mr. Marcin must seem to have composed what is known in their vernacular as a good show.

The play is commensurately enacted by Miss Marjorie Rambeau and wardrobe in the leading role and, in the lesser roles, by Miss Anne Sutherland and bosom, Mr. Cyril Keightley, Mr. Robert McWade, Mr. William Morris, Mr. Edouard Durand and the usual number of expensive lamps.

VI

"The Silent Witness," by Mr. Otto Hauerbach, is a sort of *dix-vingt-trente* Follies of "Common Clay," "Madame X," "A Woman of No Importance," "The Guilty Man," the Augustus Thomas Sciences, "Brown of Harvard," "The Road to Damascus," "Just Boys" and the Los Angeles studio literature. The prosecuting attorney who recognizes in the accused his own morganatic child, the mother and father brought face to face after all these years, the profundities of psycho-physiopalmistry (in this instance, "pernicious anæmia"), the "Here's to good old Tuskegee, drink 'er down, drink 'er down," the eleventh hour oratory in the Criminal Court Building that causes the erstwhile proud leading man to bow his head in shame and contrition and extend his arms to receive the poor little woman whom sniffle-sniffle he betrayed in his youth—all these Mr. Hauerbach again vouchsafes us, though this time without a musical accompaniment by Rudolph Friml. Nor has Mr. Hauerbach injected into his materials, as Mr. Marcin injected into his, any lively juices, whether of proscenium trickery or of humour. The result is an elephantine coquetting with the yokel tear-duct. The acting of the play, in the main, is of the Cheyne-Stokes deep-breathing order. And where not of this species, of the sort that osteopaths all handy tables, chairs and mantel-pieces.

VII

"Broadway and Buttermilk" belongs to what may, in the light of such latterly displacements of the rural play as "The Road to Happiness" and the like, be called the James A. Hernia school of drama. This school, as implied, is a rupture of "Shore Acres" and of the genus the play by Mr. Willard Mack mentioned above constitutes a glittering example. It is cheap, vulgar and without gleam of merit. Its badinage is of the corner-of-the-mouth order that passes current on the local Rialto for wit; its characterizations are of the chin-whisker species indigenous to the third-rate music show; its viewpoint and amicable attitude toward the country not untypical of a Broadway morning after.

Unlike this specimen, "Turn to the Right," by the Messrs. Winchell Smith and John Hazzard, though generically of the same catalogue, comes out an amusing jinks by virtue of a treatment at once theatrically artful and facetious. In place of the shabby self-conscious sophistication of the Mack piece, there is here a sense of nicer sauce, an air of genuine fiddlededee. The bald mechanics of plot are dressed up in sufficiently comic togs to muzzle the too nosey beholder. The characterizations, though negotiated almost wholly at the tips of the impersonators' tongues, are yet suggestive and not lacking in quickness. The humours are frequently racy of the broad *arrondissement* rather than, in the instance of the Mack manuscript, of the small-time vaudevilles. Of the George M. Cohan academy, the little piece provides a very good example of popular show-making.

VIII

"The Guilty Man," manufactured by Miss Ruth Davis and the late Mr. Charles Klein from the familiar fiction of Coppée, is a tedious theatrical evening less because its tale was already comparatively listless when spun by Victor Hugo—to say nothing of the period of its more recent reiteration by countless Bissons, Kinkeads and Hauerbachs—than because its tale is here once again set forth in all its naked anility. Already a plot cabbaged right and left by the small fry Sardous, the present chauffeurs of the theme have brought to their business not a glimmer of bounce nor novelty. The result is a melodrama as obvious from the outset as a railroad time-table and as laborious in its movement as a stomach-danseuse in the Rue Pigalle. The ruined innocent, the lapse of eighteen years, the hyphenated offspring, the crime, the court house, the trial, the prosecuting attorney, the recognition, the head-drooping and the repentance are with us again in all their pristine banality. The staging of the manuscript by Mr. B. Iden Payne, who did so well by Galsworthy late last season, is of quite as senile a brand as the manuscript itself. The same, saving in the instances of Miss Fenwick and Mr. Hughes, with the acting. Miss Emily Ann Wellman interprets the role of the hysterical seduced lady with the series of college yells and Swoboda movements favourite in the Eugenie Blair belt; Mr. Lowell Sherman, the role of the penitent boche with a liberal hirsutal besprinkling of talcum powder and copious intermittent sprays of saliva; and the balance of the cast perform their respective duties after the fashion of the substitute summer companies at the Gymnase, that is, principally with sets of false whiskers. Miss Fenwick, despite a tendency to interpret sullenness and despondency by a mere hoarsening of the voice, is skilful and lucid as the war baby of the manuscript and Mr. Hughes, though for some inscrutable cause employing an accent in an otherwise accentless cast, competent as the sentimental young artist.

IX

It is, generally, as difficult for an English playwriter to be adroitly risqué as it is for a married woman. The

Britisher who essays to write an adroitly risqué little play is most often as light and devilish as a German dancing the tango. With the exception of Pinero's "Wife Without a Smile" I am at the moment unable to summon to mind a single modishly naughty British farce possessed of that delicate touch so imperatively necessary to these affairs. "Please Help Emily," by H. M. Harwood, lately put out in the Lyceum, is still another of the London efforts to capture the Gallic air and quite as heavy and melancholy as the numerous essays that have preceded it. No sooner does the author affect a momentary mood of wickedness than he becomes nervously frantic immediately the moment is over with to explain at great and serious length that what went before was intrinsically impeccable from any angle of morality from which his audience may have elected to regard it. The moment a bashful *double entendre* peeks furtively around the corner of the proscenium arch, out dashes the playwright armed with swabbing instruments and anti-toxins. The evening, in brief, amounts to three acts of apology interrupted at intervals by pseudo-compromising situations of the sort that go to make up the violent serials in the *Ladies' Home Journal.*

X

Mr. Arthur Hopkins is a producer so much after one's heart, a gentleman of tastes so exploring and attractive, that it comes as something of qualm to observe him exhibiting, at what must have been very great outlay, a manuscript so poor as the Macphersons', *frère et sœur,* "The Happy Ending." Conceived with a meagre imagination and executed in mechanical metaphor, the play limps on its written way a pale translation of already pallid Maeterlinckianisms, a bloodless deduction from Von Hofmannsthal, a prosy pillage of Barrie, an unsuccessful flirtation with Eleanor Gates. For the play tilts now and again with each of these, with lance returned each time completely shattered. The perfumery clerk philosophy of Maeterlinck, the fine tones of Von Hofmannsthal's "Death and the Fool," the lovely Never-Never Land of Barrie, the bizarre and fascinating fancies of Miss Gates—with these have the Macphersons attempted to play and with these (with even the musks of Maeterlinck) have they badly burned their fingers. Their play, with its theme of glittering life in death, is, in a phrase, a play as empty of true invention as imitations of the Gillette safety razor.

How Mr. Hopkins deceived himself with the manuscript is somewhat difficult of interpretation. However much the idea of the play may have appealed to him, his sharpness of eye which permitted him to detect in "The Poor Little Rich Girl" a comparatively analogical document born into life by genuine vision and a genuine quill-driving grace, should have revealed to him the poverty of mind which sought here to garb and embellish that idea.

The scenic equipment for the play, the designing of Mr. Robert E. Jones, imparts in several instances a pleasurable sensation to the eye, yet the employment in the exterior scenes of a double, and triple, inner proscenium box seems a sad error. These inner arches are even more antagonistic to illusion than the corpulent, bald-headed and profusely moist orchestra leader who has been permitted vaingloriously to stand him up two feet above the line of footlights and wave his arms simultaneously through the musical accompaniment to and the dialogue of the exhibit.

For the princely amount expended on this singularly unfortunate play, Mr. Hopkins might have produced four such intriguing and inexpensive pieces as Lothar Schimdt's "Only a Dream," Chesterton's "Magic," Thoma's "Morality," and Schnitzler's "The Vast Land," and might have achieved thereby, in place of the present deplorings and fiscal losses, a four-fold glory and, quite probably, a ten-fold golden gain.

THE CREED OF A NOVELIST

By H. L. Mencken

§ 1

THE similarity between the fundamental ideas of Joseph Conrad and those of Theodore Dreiser, so often exhibited to the public gape in this place, is made plain beyond all shadow of cavil by the appearance of Dreiser's "A Hoosier Holiday" (*Lane*), a volume of mingled reminiscence, observation, speculation and confession of faith. Put the book beside Conrad's "A Personal Record" (*Harper,* 1912), and you will find parallels from end to end. Or better still, put it beside Hugh Walpole's little volume, "Joseph Conrad" (*Nesbit*), in which the Conradean metaphysic is condensed from the novels even better than Conrad has done it himself: at once you will see how the two novelists, each a worker in the elemental emotions, each a rebel against the prevailing cocksureness and superficiality, each an alien to his place and time, touch each other in a hundred ways.

"Conrad," says Walpole (himself a very penetrating and competent novelist), "is of the firm and resolute conviction that life is too strong, too clever and too remorseless for the sons of men." And then, in amplification: "It is as though, from some high window, looking down, he were able to watch some shore, from whose security men were forever launching little cockleshell boats upon a limitless and angry sea . . . From his height he can follow their fortunes, their brave struggles, their fortitude to the very end. He admires that courage, the simplicity of that faith, but his irony springs from his knowledge of the inevitable end." . . . Substitute the name of Dreiser for that of Conrad, with "a Hoosier Holiday" as text, and you will have to change scarcely a word. Perhaps one, to wit, "clever." I suspect that Dreiser, writing so of his own creed, would be tempted to make it "stupid," or, at all events, "unintelligible." The struggle of man, as he sees it, is more than impotent; it is meaningless. There is, to his eye, no grand ingenuity, no skillful adaptation of means to end, no moral (or even dramatic) plan in the order of the universe. He can get out of it only a sense of profound and inexplicable *dis*order, of a seeking without a finding. There is not only no neat programme of rewards and punishments; there is not even an understandable balance of causes and effects. The waves which batter the cockleshells change their direction at every instant. Their navigation is a vast adventure, but intolerably fortuitous and inept—a voyage without chart, compass, sun or stars . . .

So at bottom. But to look into the blackness steadily, of course, is almost beyond the endurance of man. In the very moment that its impenetrability is grasped the imagination begins attacking it with pale beams of false light. All religions, I dare say, are thus projected from the soul of man, and not only all religions, but also all great agnosticisms. Nietzsche, shrinking from the horror of that abyss of negation, revived the Pythagorean concept of *der ewigen Wiederkunft*—a vain and blood-curdling sort of comfort. To it, after a while, he added explanations almost Christian—a whole repertoire of whys and wherefores, aims and goals,

aspirations and significances. Other seers have gone back even further: the Transcendentalists stemmed from Zeno of Elea. The late Mark Twain, in an unpublished work, toyed with a characteristically daring idea: that men are to some unimaginably vast and incomprehensible Being what the unicellular organisms of his body are to man, and so on *ad infinitum*. Dreiser occasionally dallies with much the same notion; he likens the endless reactions going on in the world we know, the myriadal creation, collision and destruction of entities, to the slow accumulation and organization of cells *in utero*. He would make us specks in the insentient embryo of some gigantic Presence whose form is still unimaginable and whose birth must wait for eons and eons. Again, he turns to something not easily distinguishable from philosophical idealism, whether out of Berkeley or Fichte it is hard to make out—that is, he would interpret the whole phenomenon of life as no more than an appearance, a nightmare of some unseen sleeper or of men themselves, an "uncanny blur of nothingness"—in Euripides' phrase, "a tale told by an idiot, dancing down the wind." Yet again, he talks vaguely of the intricate polyphony of a cosmic orchestra, cacophonous to our dull ears. Finally, he puts the observed into the ordered, reading a purpose in the displayed event: "life was intended as a spectacle, it was intended to sting and hurt" . . . But these are only gropings, and not to be read too critically. From speculations and explanations he always returns, Conrad-like, to the bald fact: to "the spectacle and stress of life." The bolder flights go with the puerile solutions of current religion and morals. Even more than Conrad, he sees life as a struggle in which man is not only doomed to defeat, but denied any glimpse or understanding of his antagonist. His philosophy is an agnosticism that has almost got beyond curiosity. What good would it do us, he asks, to know? In our ignorance and helplessness, we may at least get a slave's comfort out of cursing the gods. Suppose we saw them striving blindly too, and pitied them?

§ 2.

THE function of poetry, says F. C. Prescott, in "Poetry and Dreams" (a book so modest and yet so searching that it will be years before the solemn donkeys of the seminaries ever hear of it), is to conjure up for us a vivid picture of what we want, but cannot get. The desire is half of the story, but the inhibition is as plainly the other half, and of no less importance. It is this element that gives its glamour to tragedy; the mind seizes upon the image as a substitute for the reality, and the result is the psychical *katharsis* described by Aristotle. It is precisely by the same process that Dreiser and Conrad get a profound and melancholy poetry into their books. Floating above the bitter picture of what actually is, there is always the misty but inordinately charming picture of what might be or ought to be. Here we get a clue to the method of both men, and to the secret of their capacity for reaching the emotions. All of Conrad's brilliant and poignant creatures are dreamers who go to smash upon the rocks of human weakness and stupidity—Kurtz, Nostromo, Lord Jim, Almayer, Razumov, Heyst, even Whalley and M'Whirr. And so with Carrie Meeber, Jennie Gerhardt, Frank Cowperwood and Eugene Whitla. They are not merely vivid and interesting figures; they are essentially tragic figures, and in their tragedy, despite its superficial sordidness, there is a deep and ghostly poetry. "My task," said Conrad once, "is, by the power of the printed word, to make you hear, to make you feel—it is, above all, to make you *see*." Comprehension, sympathy, pity—these are the things he seeks to evoke. And these, too, are the things that Dreiser seeks to evoke. The reader does not arise from such a book as "Sister Carrie" with a smirk of satisfaction, as he might from a novel by Howells or James; he leaves it infinitely touched . . .

Mr. Walpole, in his little book, is at pains to prove that Conrad is neither realist nor romanticist, but an intricate combination of both. The thesis scarcely needs support, or even statement: *all* imaginative writers of the higher ranks are both. Plain realism, as in the early Zola, simply wearies us by its futility; plain romance, if we ever get beyond youth, makes us laugh. It is their artistic combination, as in life itself, that fetches us—the subtle projection of the muddle that is living against the orderliness that we reach out for—the eternal war of aspiration and experience—the combat of man and his destiny. As I say, this contrast lies at the bottom of all that is vital and significant in imaginative writing; to argue for it is to wade in platitudes. I speak of it here simply because the more stupid of Dreiser's critics—and what author has ever been hoofed by worse asses!—insist upon seeing him and denouncing him as a realist, and as a realist only. One of them, for example, has lately printed a long article maintaining that he is blind to the spiritual side of man altogether, and that he accounts for his characters solely by some incomprehensible "theory of animal behaviour." Could one imagine a more absurd mouthing of a phrase? One is almost staggered, indeed, by such critical imbecility, even in a college professor. The truth is, of course, that all of Dreiser's novels deal fundamentally with the endless conflict between this "animal behaviour" and the soarings of the spirit—between the destiny forced upon his characters by their environment, their groping instincts, their lack of courage and resourcefulness, and the destiny they picture for themselves in their dreams. This is the tragedy of Carrie Meeber and Jennie Gerhardt. The physical fact of their "seduction" (they are willing enough) blasts them doubly, for on the one hand it brings down upon them the conventional burden of the pariah, and on the other hand the worldly advancement which follows widens their aspiration beyond their inherent capacities, and so augments their unhappiness. It is the tragedy, too, of Cowperwood and Witla. To see these men as mere melodramatic Don Juans is to fall into an error almost unimaginably ridiculous. The salient fact about them, indeed, is that they are *not* mere Don Juans—that they are men in whom the highest idealism strives against the bonds of the flesh. Witla, passion-torn, goes down to disaster and despair. It is what remains of the wreck of his old ideals that floats him into peace at last. As for Cowperwood, we have yet to see his actual end—but how plainly its shadows are cast before! Life is beating him, and through his own weakness. There remains for him, as for Lord Jim, only the remnant of a dream.

§ 3.

With so much ignorant and misleading criticism of him going about, the appearance of "A Hoosier Holiday" should be of service to Dreiser's reputation, for it shows the man as he actually is, stripped of all the scarlet trappings hung upon him by horrified lady reviewers, male and female. The book, indeed, is amazingly naif. Slow in tempo, discursive, meditative, it covers a vast territory, and lingers in far fields. One finds in it an almost complete confession of faith, artistic, religious, even political. And not infrequently that confession comes in the form of somewhat disconcerting confidences—about the fortunes of the house of Dreiser, the dispersed Dreiser family, the old neighbors in Indiana, new friends made along the way. As readers of "A Traveller at Forty" are well aware, Dreiser knows little of reticence, and is no slave to prudery. In that earlier book he described the people he encountered exactly as he saw them, without forgetting a vanity or a wart. In "A Hoosier Holiday" he goes even further: he speculates about them, prodding into the motives behind their acts, wondering what they would do in this or that situation, forcing them painfully into laboratory jars. They be-

come, in the end, not unlike characters in a novel; one misses only the neatness of a plot. Strangely enough, the one personage of the chronicle who remains dim throughout is the artist, Franklin Booth, Dreiser's host and companion on the long motor ride from New York to Indiana, and the maker of the book's excellent pictures. One gets a brilliant etching of Booth's father, and scarcely less vivid portraits of Speed, the chauffeur; of various persons encountered on the way, and of friends and relatives dredged up out of the abyss of the past. But of Booth one learns little save that he is a Christian Scientist and a fine figure of a man. There must have been much talk during those two weeks of careening along the high-road, and Booth must have borne some part in it, but what he said is very meagrely reported, and so he is still somewhat vague at the end—a personality sensed, but scarcely apprehended.

However, it is Dreiser himself who is the chief character of the story, and who stands out from it most brilliantly. One sees in the man all the special marks of the novelist: his capacity for photographic and relentless observation, his insatiable curiosity, his keen zest in life as a spectacle, his comprehension of and sympathy for the poor striving of humble folks, his endless mulling of insoluble problems, his recurrent Philistinism, his impatience of restraints, his suspicion of messiahs, his passion for physical beauty, his relish for the gaudy drama of big cities, his incurable Americanism. The panorama that he enrolls runs the whole scale of the colors; it is a series of extraordinarily vivid pictures. The sombre gloom of the Pennsylvania hills, with Wilkes-Barré lying among them like a gem; the procession of little country towns, sleepy and a bit hoggish; the flash of Buffalo, Cleveland, Indianapolis; the gargantuan coal-pockets and ore-docks along the Erie shore; the tinsel summer resorts; the lush Indiana farm-lands, with their stodgy, bovine people—all of these things are sketched in simply, and yet almost magnificently. I know, indeed, of no book which better describes the American hinterland. Here we have no idle spying by a stranger, but a full-length representation by one who knows the thing he describes intimately, and is himself a part of it. Almost every mile of the road travelled has been Dreiser's own road in life. He knew those unkempt Indiana towns in boyhood; he wandered in the Indiana woods; he came to Toledo, Cleveland, Buffalo as a young man; all the roots of his existence are out there. And so he does his chronicle *con amore*, with many a sentimental dredging up of old memories, old hopes and old dreams.

Strangely enough, for all the literary efflorescence of the Middle West, such pictures of it are very rare. I know, in fact, of no other on the same scale. It is, in more than one way, the heart of America, and yet it has gone undescribed. Dreiser remedies that lack with all his characteristic laboriousness and painstaking. When he has done with them, those drowsy villages and oafish country towns have grown as real as the Chicago of "Sister Carrie" and "The Titan." One sees a land that blinks and naps in the sunshine like some great cow, udders full, the cud going—a land of Dutch fatness and contentment—a land, despite its riches, of almost unbelievable stupidity and immobility. We get a picture of a typical summer afternoon; mile after mile of farms, villages, little towns, the people sleepy and empty in mind, lolling on their verandas, killing time between trivial events, shut off from all the turmoil of the world. What, in the end, will come out of this over-fed, too-happy region? Ideas? Rebellions? The spark to set off great wars? Or only the silence of decay? In Ohio industry has already invaded the farms; chimneys arise among the haystacks. And so further west. But in Indiana there is a back-water, a sort of American Midi, a neutral ground in the battles of the nation. It has no art, no great industry, no dominating men. Its literature, in the main, is a feeble romanticism for flappers and fat women.

Its politics is a skeptical opportunism. It is not stirred by great passions. It knows no heroes. . . . What will be the end of it? Which way is it heading?

§ 4.

SAVE for passages in "The Titan," "A Hoosier Holiday" marks the high tide of Dreiser's writing—that is, as sheer writing. His old faults are in it, and plentifully. There are empty, brackish phrases enough, God knows—"high noon" among them. But for all that, there is an indeniable glow in it; it shows, in more than one place, an approach to style; the mere wholesaler of words has become, in some sense, a connoisseur, even a voluptuary. The picture of Wilkes-Barré girt in by her hills is simply done, and yet there is imagination in it, and touches of brilliance. The sombre beauty of the Pennsylvania mountains is vividly transferred to the page. The towns by the wayside are differentiated, swiftly drawn, made to live. There are excellent sketches of people—a courtly hotelkeeper in some God-forsaken hamlet, his self-respect triumphing over his wallow; a group of babbling Civil War veterans, endlessly mouthing incomprehensible jests; the half-grown beaux and belles of the summer resorts, enchanted and yet a bit staggered by the awakening of sex; Booth *père* and his sinister politics; broken and forgotten men in the Indiana towns; policemen, waitresses, farmers, country characters; Dreiser's own people—the boys and girls of his youth; his brother Paul, the Indiana Schneckenburger and Francis Scott Key, author of "On the Banks of the Wabash"; his sisters and brothers; his beaten, hopeless, pious father; his brave and noble mother. The book is dedicated to this mother, now long dead, and in a way it is a memorial to her, a monument to affection. Life bore upon her cruelly; she knew poverty at its lowest ebb and despair at its bitterest; and yet there was in her a touch of fineness that never yielded, a gallant spirit that faced and fought things through. *Une ame grande dans un petit destin:* a great soul in a small destiny! One thinks, somehow, of the mother of Gounod. . . . Her son has not forgotten her. His book is her epitaph. He enters into her presence with love and with reverence and with something not far from awe. . . .

In sum, this record of a chance holiday is much more than a mere travel book, for it offers, and for the first time, a clear understanding of the fundamental faiths and ideas, and of the intellectual and spiritual background no less, of a man with whom the future historian of American literature will have to deal at no little length. Dreiser, as yet, has not come into his own. In England his true stature has begun to be recognized, and once the war is over I believe that he will be "discovered," as the phrase is, in Germany and Russia, and perhaps in France. But in his own country he is still denied and belabored in a manner that would be comic were it not so pathetically stupid. The college professors rail and snarl at him in the *Nation* and the *Dial;* the elderly virgins of the newspapers represent him as an iconoclast, an immoralist, an Anti-Christ, even a German spy; the professional moralists fatuously proceed to jail him because his Witlas and his Cowperwoods are not eunuchs—more absurdly still, because a few "God damns" are scattered through the 736 crowded pages of "The 'Genius.'" The Puritan fog still hangs over American letters; it is formally demanded that all literature be made with the girl of sixteen in mind, and that she be assumed to be quite ignorant of sex. And the orthodox teachers sing the hymn that is lined out. In Prof. Fred Lewis Pattee's "History of American Literature Since 1870" (*Century*), just published, there is no mention of Dreiser whatever! Such novelists as Owen Wister, Robert W. Chambers and Holman F. Day are mentioned as "leaders"; substantial notices are given to Capt. Charles King, Blanche Willis Howard and Julian Hawthorne; five whole pages are dedicated to F. Marion Craw-

ford; even Richard Harding Davis, E. P. Roe and "Octave Thanet" are soberly estimated. But not a line about Dreiser! Not an incidental mention of him! One recalls Richardson's "American Literature," with its contemptuous dismissal of Mark Twain. A sapient band, these college professors!

But the joke, of course, is not on Dreiser, but on the professors themselves, and on the host of old maids, best-seller fanatics and ecstatic Puritans who support them. Time will bring the Indianan his revenge, and perhaps he will yield to humor and help time along. A Dreiser novel with a Puritan for its protagonist would be something to caress the soul—a full-length portrait of the Eternal Pharisee, a limning of the Chemically Pure, done scientifically, relentlessly, affectionately. Dreiser knows the animal from snout to tail. He could do a picture that would live. . . .

§ 5.

Of the novels that have reached me since our last session not many have beguiled me. With paper so costly and the thoughts of the people solicited by so many more important concerns, one might reasonably expect the publishers to scrutinize manuscripts with an extra-careful eye; but the truth is that, though the gross output of fiction is less than it was two years ago, the relative proportion of shoddy writing remains at its old mark. That is to say, nine out of ten of the new novels are without any merit or value whatever. Such a piece of trade goods, for example, as "The Pride of a Moment," by Carolyn Wells (*Doran*) is not only artificial and empty; it is downright tedious, and reading it is a hard business. "The Unspeakable Perk," by Samuel Hopkins Adams (*Houghton-Mifflin*), is almost as bad. In substance it is an attempt to get into one small volume the theatrical romance of Zenda, the sentimentality of Henry Sydnor Harrison, and the quasi-scientific quality of the same author's earlier book, "The Health Master." The result is nearly complete failure. The thing is so badly nailed together that it squeaks like a windjammer in a gale. Mr. Adams' successive difficulties with fiction should have convinced him long ago that the didactic novel is not for him. It is a pity that he does not go back to that unadorned exposition which, in "The Great American Fraud," he managed with such force and skill.

I pass over "Trail by Fire," by Richard Matthews Hallet (*Small-Maynard*); "Big Timber," by Bertrand W. Sinclair (*Little-Brown*); "The White Pearl," by Edith Barnard Delano and Samuel Field (*Duffield*); "Tish," by Mary Roberts Rinehart (*Houghton*); "Petty Simmons at Siwash," by George Fitch (*Little-Brown*); and "Ten Beautiful Years," by Mary Knight Potter (*Lippincott*)—the first three, conventional best-sellers, full of villains, barechested heroes, stolen gems, beautiful heroines, and all the other usual lumber; the last three collections of well-written but uninspired magazine stories. Nor can I find anything save an endless ingenuity in "The Red Stain," by Achmed Abdullah (*Fly*), an author capable of very much better writing, as readers of The Smart Set well know. Nor in "Love in Youth," by Frank Harris (*Doran*), a romance very commonplace (almost, indeed, Williamsonian) in plan, though with oases of agreeable observation and speculation. One looks for originality in Mr. Harris, and automatically resents the descent to millionaire heroines and handsome chauffeurs. Perhaps the story is a brick heaved satirically at the compounders of department-store fiction. The late Frank Norris played that trick in "Blix." Deriding the sentimentality of his time, he had been accused of spurning sour grapes. His answer was "Blix," a tale as sentimental as the best of them, and an excellent piece of writing to boot. "Love in Youth" is also a good piece of writing, but its content is scarcely worthy its investiture.

"Three Sons and a Mother," by Gilbert Cannan (*Doran*); "The Family," by Elinor Mordaunt (*Lane*), and "The Prisoner," by Alice Brown (*Macmillan*), are marked by far more ambitious effort. They are, indeed, character studies on a rather large scale, and all of them show dignity of conception and care in the writing. Of the three, I have found "The Family" most interesting. It offers a picture of the gradual decay of an English provincial family, and has an air of assurance in it that somehow carries conviction. . . . "Magdalen," by J. S. Machar (*Kennerley*), is the first of a series of Slavic Translations to be made by Dr. Leo Wiener, of Harvard. The choice of this tale for the opening volume was unfortunate, for on the one hand it is written in a style that must inevitably strike the American reader as stilted, and on the other hand the life that it shows in a small Bohemian town is vastly more Teutonic than Slavic. The Bohemians, indeed, have been Teutonized almost as effectively as the Wends, despite their sentimental glances toward the East. Dr. Řehák in the story, rising to denounce Austrian domination, can't do it without using German words: he pays a fine for the crime. What could be more German than Pilsner? Who hates a Croat, a Slovene, a Serbian, more than he hates an Austrian? Alas, for Bohemia, that charming land! . . .

Two novels remain, and by long odds the best of the boiling. Of "Casuals of the Sea," by William McFee (*Doubleday*), you have doubtless heard news; the daily papers have granted much space to it, and Huneker has given it two solid columns in the *Sun*. A disorderly and uneven story, and yet an astonishingly fresh and vivid one. As for me, I refuse to believe that it is the work of a sheer beginner. It is too sophisticated for that, too plentifully flavored with the tricks of the trade, too consciously clever. But all the same, it is plainly the work of one who has but lately got his stride; it has an air of newness; its people come from first-hand observation; there is a total absence of the marking time of the old novelist. I think you will like it. . . . The other book is "Windy McPherson's Son," by Sherwood Anderson (*Lane*), a first novel that holds out unmistakable promise. The figure of Sam McPherson, financier and romanticist, dominates it from the first page to the last; all the other characters, though some of them are very deftly drawn, are unimportant save as they react upon him. We follow him from his boyhood in a little Iowa town, overshadowed by the drunkenness and clownishness of his father, to his youth as a pushing young business man in Chicago, his maturity as a manipulator of men and money, and into the psychic break-up of his middle age. As in Dreiser's "The Titan" the essential conflict of the drama is within the man himself. On the one hand there is his homeric energy, his determination to get on, the sheer clang and rattle of him, and on the other hand there is the groping sentimentality that beats him at the height of his success. He and his wife fall out almost absurdly: she can't have a child. But behind that bald fact one senses a dream that is grand and even noble, and it is the harsh awakening from it that shakes McPherson out of his world, and sets him adrift at forty, a waster, a drunkard and a chaser of chimeras. This catastrophe, it seems to me, is managed weakly. An air of unreality, even of improbability, gets into it. Nevertheless, one somehow picks up something of the author's own belief in it, and at bottom, I daresay, it is soundly enough imagined. Turn to Crile, and you will find much the same picture of the devastating effect of an accumulation of violent impressions and sensations, a too rapid gathering of experience. But whatever its fault here, the book at least lifts itself far out of the common rut. It is written forcefully, earnestly, almost passionately. There is the gusto of a true artist in it. I suspect that we shall hear much more about this Mr. Anderson.



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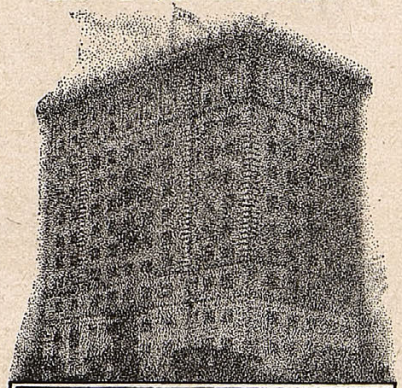
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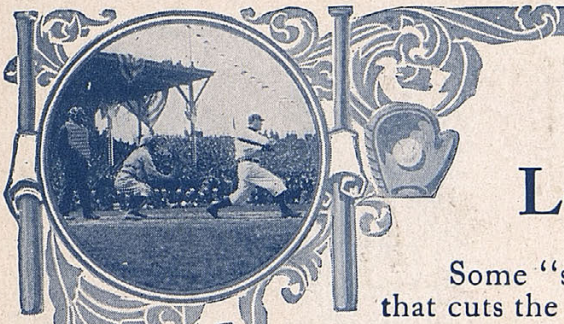
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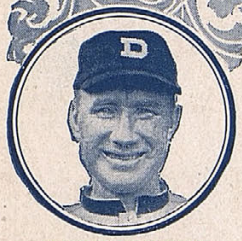


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